

THE CUSHMAN SCHOOL: THE HISTORY OF AN INDEPENDENT
SCHOOL IN DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA

By

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Abstract of Dissertation Presented to the Graduate Council
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The purpose of this study is to trace the development of the Cushman School, the oldest private elementary school continuously in operation in Dade County, Florida.

The history of the Cushman School as a case study gives insight into problems facing public and private schools. The study examines problems of today and their historical roots. The social forces and other influences that have affected the development of the Cushman School are examined in detail. Alternatives provided by the school are discussed along with the role of the Cushman School in the future.

The review of literature includes a statewide historical overview of private, elementary schools and a history of private education in Dade County.

The study focuses on the history of the Cushman School in the context of related social developments.

Forces that have influenced the development of the Cushman School include the Florida "boom," the tourist trade, the depression, World War II, the Cuban immigration, integration, the Mariel/Haitian influx of immigrants, the loss of faith in public schools, and computer technology. These social forces were all important in the development of the school, but the guiding and most important force has always been the personality and educational philosophy of Laura Cushman.

The role of the private school in the future will continue to be one of giving parents their legal right of choice in pursuit of an education for their children. Because the independent school is not under government control, it is free to teach what it wishes to teach in the manner in which it wishes. Innovative styles of teaching and materials can be used because the independent school is not constricted by state adopted textbook lists and other restrictive laws. Independent schools in the future should work with public schools to become a valuable asset to the society as a whole. Public schools in general, and students in particular, can benefit from the stimulating presence of independent schools.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In 1980 there were over 300 independent schools in Dade County, educating over 50,000 students. Statewide, over 300,000 students were enrolled in independent schools.

Independent schooling has been an important aspect of American education from its foundations. According to Otto Kraushaar writing in 1972:

Private schools have long offered the means for minority factions to protect and extend their micro-systems within the macro-structure of American society. In this manner the freedom to be different and so to enrich our cultural milieu has been extended. Through the years private operations initiated the kindergarten, education for women, normal schools, technological education, and numerous elements of special education for the handicapped. Legislatures and the judiciary have generally seen fit to protect these independent options which usually have been carried on without state support. Where the state was not ready to act, private elements often could and did.¹

The contributions of independent education are important. A quality educational system must maintain goals that are sound and essential to the society as well as allowing for "creative alternatives which help to meet changing conditions."²

The recent Coleman report emphasizes the importance of independent schools in the total educational system.³ In an article in the Gainesville Sun (Gainesville, Florida) of July 12, 1981, James S. Coleman commented that the report

showed that on the average Roman Catholic and other private schools promote higher achievement than do public schools for comparable students, and that they do so without exacerbating racial or economical segregation in education.

With the rapid population growth in Florida during the past 25 years, the growth of independent schools has accelerated. During this period " . . . the character of non-public schools has changed in Florida."⁴

Nonpublic schools are serving students from the middle class and even the upper lower class. These are students who formerly were public school students. A case study of The Cushman School will provide insights by showing how an independent school has developed in conjunction with the surrounding community. The changing role of The Cushman School as it prepares to meet future challenges will be studied in depth.

Educational leaders must become more informed about independent schools, what their role has been, their changing character and what that role may be in the future.

The case study is a method which can be helpful in this endeavor. According to William Gee, "The case may be an individual, an institution, a community or any group considered

as a unit for study." He sees this method as justified because "every individual case has characteristics which may be regarded as typical or representative of a large number of cases."⁵

A case study approach can provide an analysis of historical development of the independent school in Florida. No history of independent education in Florida has been written. Several general histories of education in the state have been published. Early histories by George Bush and Thomas Cochran make brief mention of independent schools. Later works by Nita Pyburn and Boyce Ezell are specifically concerned with the public school system. Joseph Montgomery surveyed private secondary schools.⁶ A historical case study of the oldest independent elementary school in Dade County may provide insights into the role of private education as an alternative and partner to public education.

Local history is an important source of information for decision makers and future scholars. According to Peter Jordan, the local historian "could well be interested in determining the beginning and development of a single institution. . . ."⁷

An accepted method for gathering data is the use of oral history. The oral history method developed by W. Baum will be employed in this study, along with other primary sources.⁸

Problem Stated

The problem is to produce an accurate, historical narrative of The Cushman School, founded in 1924, in order to supply answers to the following questions:

1. What forces have influenced the development of The Cushman School?
2. What have been the effects of social forces on curriculum at The Cushman School?
3. What are the alternatives to public education provided by The Cushman School?
4. What will be the role of The Cushman School in the future?

Answers to these questions should help educational leaders become more informed decision makers.

Design of the Study

The problem will be investigated using the method of historiography. The review of related literature will include a survey of the history of independent schools in Florida and a more detailed history of independent elementary schools in Dade County.

Sources of information for the study will include newspapers, periodicals, interviews, pamphlets, official records, letters, diaries, films, transcripts, histories of Florida, and recordings.

Definition of Terms

In this work the terms "independent," "private," and "nonpublic" are used interchangeably to designate those educational institutions which are not supported by state or federal funds and, thus, are free from political or financial administration by government. This independence implies liberty of purpose and practice.

"Elementary" refers to all schooling from prekindergarten up to but not including seventh grade.

Since school records and reports make no distinction between "curriculum" and "course of study," the terms will be used as found in the source material.

Limitations

The boundaries, reservations, and qualifications in this study include the following:

1. This study is specifically centered on The Cushman School. A statewide historical overview of independent elementary schools in the state is included in the review of related literature to provide background for the case study.
2. Because the case study method is used, the overview of the history given in the review of literature will not be in depth, but rather a historical survey. The history of The Cushman School and surrounding community will be dealt with in depth.

3. Every effort has been made to utilize all pertinent information available on independent schools in Florida and The Cushman School. Because of the nature of historical research, it is possible that some information may have been missed because it was not available or did not come to the attention of the researcher.

Overview of the Dissertation

The background and history of independent education in Florida will be presented in the section designated as the review of the related literature.

From the background provided by this review, the study will focus on the history of The Cushman School in the context of related social developments. Findings will be summarized.

Findings will be analyzed and summarized in a final chapter seeking to provide answers to the questions presented in the earlier statement of the problem.

NOTES

¹ Otto Kraushaar, Private Schools from the Puritans to the Present (Bloomington, IN: Delta Kappa Gamma Education Foundation, 1976), p. 5.

² Kraushaar, p. 6.

³ James S. Coleman, Equality of Educational Opportunity (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Publishing Office, 1966).

⁴ Florida Department of Education, Characteristics of Non-Public Schools in Florida (Tallahassee: 1977), p. 35.

⁵ William Gee, Social Science Research Methods (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1950), p. 21.

⁶ George Bush, History of Education in Florida (Washington Government Printing Office, 1889); Thomas Cochran, History of Public School Education in Florida (Lancaster, PA: New Era Printing Co., 1921); Nita K. Pyburn, The History of the Development of a Single System of Education in Florida (Tallahassee: Florida State University Press, 1954); Boyce Ezell, The Development of Secondary Education in Florida (Spartanburg, SC: Williams Printing Co., 1932); Joseph Montgomery, "A Survey of Private Secondary Education in Florida," Thesis (University of Florida, 1951).

⁷ Peter Jordan, The Nature and Practice of State and Local History (Washington, DC: Service Center for Teachers of History, 1958).

⁸ N. Hoyle, "Oral History," Library Trends, July 1972, pp. 60-81; W. Baum, Oral History for the Local Historical Society (American Association for State and Local History, 1971).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Establishment and Growth of Private Schools in Florida

Florida depended on private schools to educate children until after the Civil War. "There was not a single public school established in Florida during its first decade of American rule (1821-1831) and few for many years thereafter, but numerous private schools were soon in operation."¹

St. Augustine was founded in 1565 and established Catholic schools there in missions as early as 1670. The fact that St. Augustine is the oldest city in the United States with the distinction of having the oldest schoolhouse is often overlooked because the settlement was Spanish. The Spanish governor licensed an English School in St. Augustine in 1805. The license went to Edmundo Walsh.²

Escambia County (Pensacola) records show the Reverend Mr. Willison advertising the "first protestant divine services and school" with a curriculum including math, Bible, rhetoric, Latin, and Greek in 1764.³

The education system in Florida was essentially the same as in other Southern states. Dating from colonial

times, it remained virtually unchanged until after the Civil War. Wealthy plantation owners either hired resident tutors or sent their children to boarding schools. Private elementary schools and academies educated children who lived in towns. Small farmers and less well-to-do business men sometimes shared the expense of a schoolmaster or prevailed upon a member of the family to teach. The poor simply did without education.⁴

Nineteenth century resident Joseph Simeon Sanchez sent his five children to boarding schools, private day schools, and academies over a period of nearly 20 years. His three daughters attended Madame Hery du Jarday's boarding school in St. Augustine. In 1838, Sanchez paid the school \$421.00 covering tuition (\$8.00 for three months) and board for two daughters. Later charges included \$1.00 for pens and ink, 37-1/2¢ for a dictionary, and three copy books 31-1/4¢. Another quarter, Sanchez was billed \$102.25 for tuition, board, and supplies, including stationery and bedding for two daughters. That same quarter, one of his sons went to day school for \$5.00 per quarter. Earlier (1833), the tuition for the same son had been \$1.00 per month at Phillips Preparatory School in St. Augustine. Brother William attended Hackett School for \$11.06 per quarter.⁵

Many children from wealthy families were sent out of state to school. Robert H. Gamble sent his niece, Miss Sallie Ward, to Montpelier Institute in Georgia during the Civil War, paying close to \$800.00 in Confederate money for a three-month term. Incidentals such as stationery, shoes, sheet music, medicine, books, and washing amounted to \$50.00.⁶ Other children were sent North to school before and after the Civil War. The Sanchez and Gamble documents are typical for their time and circumstances.

In 1821 when Florida was granted territorial status, there were only 12,000 inhabitants and half of those were Indians and slaves. There was little need of schools for such a sparse and widely spaced population. The two major towns, St. Augustine and Pensacola, were served by private church schools. Key West, which had a modest population, was also served by private church related schools. St. Augustine had only Catholic private schools and private tutors until the British occupation in 1783. During the 20 years of British occupation, the Anglican (Episcopal) church had schools in St. Augustine which required tuition, but made accommodations for the poor. When the Spanish returned in 1783, the Anglican schools were closed and the very strict Catholic academies were reinstated. These schools taught only Spanish and were in session from seven in the morning

until sunset with a two-hour lunch-siesta break. Subjects for primary students included alphabet, syllabary, reading, Christian doctrine, prayers, and litany. Arithmetic was added after the primary level when "confession" also became part of the curriculum. There is evidence of an English school teaching "religion and virtue" in St. Augustine as early as 1802.

During the territorial period (1821-1845), there were more than 23 private schools, at least 9 academies, and close to 40 teachers in the state. Most of these schools were church sponsored and catered to boys. One of the schools carried over from the Spanish possession lasted until 1824. There was some concern by the government for schools at this time. Even though tuition was charged, the city fathers made contributions in various ways. The basement of the City Hall was given to a "Mrs. Girty for a school" in 1822. Mr. Cotter and Mr. Waldo were given a room in City Hall for a school in which spelling, reading, and writing were taught for \$2.00 a month. Arithmetic and grammar could be had for \$2.50, surveying and navigation for \$4.00, and Greek, Latin, and other course necessary for college for \$6.00 a month.⁷

A Mr. House opened a Greek and Latin school in 1825 in St. Augustine. The Seminary of St. Augustine offering Greek and Latin for \$16.00 a quarter was in operation at this time

as was Mrs. Perry's school for girls teaching music, piano, drawing, painting, and French.

By 1827, newspaper notices listed the Leon Academy in Tallahassee, Webbville Academy in Jackson County, Pensacola Academy, and the Academy at St. Andrew's Bay. Henry Hill advertised a school in Pensacola offering reading, writing, grammar, arithmetic, and bookkeeping. In 1829, Tallahassee, with a population under 1,000, boasted two private schools, one academy (Leon), and two boarding schools for young ladies. Most of the schools of this era were one teacher affairs with the academies sometimes having two or three teachers. The tuition varied according to the course of study selected.⁸

For the most part, the sexes were separated in schools prior to the Civil War. The schools usually pursued a "common" or English education consisting of

1. alphabet, reading, writing, spelling, simple numbers
2. oral reading, spelling, geography, arithmetic, U.S. history
3. algebra, Latin, physical geography, physiology, science
4. advanced subjects: classics, math, Latin, Greek, modern languages (sometimes), science and natural history, natural philosophy (included botany and

zoology) history, rhetoric, literature, writing, logic, moral science, mental science.

These subjects were not organized into grade levels but were separate curricula for differing purposes.⁹

Most of the schools were set up with two-or three-term sessions with each term lasting about four or five months. Mrs. Budd's Elementary School and Mrs. Reynolds' Seminary for Young Ladies were founded in 1830. In 1832, an attempt was made to organize a "Fellenberg" school in Tallahassee.

A Fellenberg school offered manual training where students worked at practical agriculture or shop work on the school farm and studied part time. This work-study approach, although well suited to 19th century rural Florida, lasted only a year.¹⁰

The Calhoun Academy (1836), Miccosukee Academy (1839), and the Iamonia Female Institute joined the ranks of Tallahassee private schools in the 1830's. Mrs. Mary Brown's Female Boarding School, Mrs. Beard's School, Mrs. Stow's School, Miss Parrott's Female Seminary, the Atheneum Classical Institute, Rev. James Tyng's Select School for Young Ladies, Tallahassee High School, and Rutledge Institute (Episcopal), all in Tallahassee, sprang up before Florida became a state in 1845. The Rev. William Neil began his Male Academy that year in the Leon County area.¹¹

Private schools continued to prosper in St. Augustine. Miss MacKenzie's School (Boarding) was founded in 1828. A coed school for young children was started by Mr. and Mrs. Ball in 1829 and another school founded by George L. Phillips in 1832. The Phillips School was advertised continuously for 15 years as a boys' school and became coed the next year. Phillips' son opened the Phillips Academy in 1834 and his daughters opened a school for small children the same year. One daughter opened Miss Phillips' Select Seminary for Young Gentlemen in 1838 for boys under eight years old.¹² This time frame also saw the advent of the Catholic St. Augustine Academy (1833) and the Delissa Belgian School for Dutch, High German, and Danish languages in 1835. Several other Catholic schools, Boarding School of the Ladies of the Retreat (1837), St. Augustine Select Academy for the Instruction of Young Ladies and Gentlemen (1840), joined the ranks prior to statehood, as did the Pensacola Female Seminary. These were all small schools, educating between 100 and 150 pupils overall. The Pensacola Gazette for March 25, 1843, commented that "we have, it is true, primary schools here and good ones too, . . . but beyond that the means of education stops short."

Private schools sprang up in other communities with growing population centers. Key West had several private

schools "taught by cultured citizens of the port" and an Episcopal school in 1835. Mrs. S. H. Hancock had a common school in Appalachicola in 1840 including "branches that constitute a solid and useful education." A Mrs. Daniel conducted a private school teaching music, math, and languages in Jacksonville in the 1940's.¹³

Robert Bullock taught six pupils in the Marion County courthouse in 1848 in another example of the mixture of private and public education. There was another school nearby on the Hawthorne Prairie where a tutor taught several families. The school met at Plainfields, the plantation of Dr. James B. Owens, as early as 1844. The Freestone Springs Academy founded by Charles Bernheim and a Lutheran school at Camp Izard added to the private school list in Marion County. In 1849, Selah Hammond started a private academy for young ladies in Ocala, a city of four blocks. In 1852, this school became East Florida Independent Institute.

East Florida Seminary, a forerunner of the University of Florida, also had its beginnings in the area in 1833. It was a type of elementary school which moved to Gainesville in 1866.¹⁴

There were no standards for schools or teachers during this time. Florida, like other Southern states, depended on well-bred young ladies, preacher-teachers and educated young

men to teach her children. Preacher-teachers from the North came in increasing numbers beginning in 1825. There was a large turnover in the personnel of even the well-established schools such as the Leon Academy in Tallahassee. In 1838, the Reverend O. T. Hammond wrote to a young man of 17 who was a former pupil to encourage him to accept a teaching position with some wealthy plantation owners. The job was to teach the 12 children of three plantation families in return for transportation, room "board, washing, fuel, etc. etc." and \$400.00 for the first year. Hammond goes on to say that he himself had been offered "\$100.00 per anno for each pupil" because teachers were in great demand.¹⁵

By 1840, 18 academies (college preparatory) and grammar (below academy level) schools were educating almost 750 children, and 51 common schools (primary-reading and writing) had an enrollment of just over 900 children throughout the state.¹⁶ The total population was 54,477, about half of which was white.¹⁷ However, not all the smaller schools were counted. Cash said, "That there were private schools in the backwoods, payable entirely from private funds, is well known, as the writer has talked with persons who either attended those schools or knew about them."¹⁸

In the 1840's, Greek and Latin continued to be the most highly esteemed subjects with math and natural science, some

history and foreign languages following. This curriculum was the college preparatory course and did not include English or American Literature. The discipline was strict and public examinations at the end of each term were common. Some of the private common schools and academies were chartered by the state, but they remained local in origin and control. These schools "served as laboratories for trying out policies and practices, some of which were preserved and adopted later by the state supported schools."¹⁹

Many Florida children continued to be sent out of the state for education. In 1844, "three or four children from St. John's County were sent abroad (presumably to a northern state) at an average expense of \$350.00." Another man reported sending two children to Virginia for three years which cost "on the whole \$1,000."²⁰

Florida became a state in 1845 and the population increased rapidly after that. By 1850 there were 87,000 people (47,000 of them white) and still the responsibility of education was left to the private sector. The 1850 census recorded 34 academies and 69 common and grammar schools with almost 3200 pupils.²¹

Key West had four private schools, averaging about 30 pupils each, in 1851. There was a county school, but it was free only to fatherless children. Although the tuition for

this school was only \$1.00 per month per child, it did charge. Key West had the highest per capita income in the state at this time and could easily have supported more schools, but many of the boys were at work fishing, sponging and salvaging which were all very lucrative pastimes. The Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus & Mary established a school in Key West in 1868 which was to become the Convent of Mary Immaculate in 1878. St. John's Seminary of Learning was founded in Madison in 1850. It later became the Florida Normal Institute and trained teachers until 1927.²²

Schools were still being opened in private homes by pioneers who were settling a frontier land and setting up their own institutions. For example, Fred Lykes brought his family and slaves to Brooksville from South Carolina in 1851. After setting out an orange grove, cotton, and pasture grass, he opened a school in his home. He had taught school in Carolina before becoming a farmer. In the decade of the fifties, other private schools were opened in Madison, Newnansville, Jacksonville, Fernandina, Ocala, Gainesville, and Orange Springs.²³

John W. Mixon was contracted to teach about 15 children near the present town of Perry in 1850. He was to receive \$1.00 per child per month payable in cash, "corn Pork or Bacon." Mixon promised to begin teaching "Reading Writing

And Arithmetic Before the 25th of Oct 1850 Monday following to commence Subscribed."²⁴ Luckily, for his students, he was not called on to teach composition, punctuation, or grammar.

Most of the church and common schools ran short terms of only three or four months and for many children, only one term a year was possible. Farmers wanted their children to help in their fields during harvest time.²⁵ G. W. Gatewood (1939) remembers Florida schools before 1900 as "crude and far apart," mostly one room, one teacher for all grades. Their terms were about three months and there were few public schools. "Private schools in the towns were not lacking (before the Civil War) nor were tutors and governesses on the plantations, so that the dearth of public education by no means told all the story."²⁶

By 1860 there were 138 private schools with 4,486 students enrolled. There were 97 public schools in the state serving about 2,000 students.²⁷ The public school system did not really come into being until the constitutional revision in 1869 which revised the 1868 uniform system of schools into a comprehensive school law providing the financial base for segregated public schools for all Florida children. It also provided for the State Board of Education and the State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

In 1867, J. B. Owens advertised his "Stonewall" Female Institute with handbills. The school was in his home in Marion County. Board and tuition were advertised at \$150.00 for a 20-week term. Pupils were required to furnish their own lights and paid extra for instruction in Latin, piano, guitar, and use of instruments. The first all white private school in Jacksonville opened in the Odd Fellows Hall in 1865. After that, a profusion of private schools grew up there.²⁹

In addition to the schools previously listed, the number of private schools increased with the Smith and The Select School for Boys (both in Leon County) in the decade following the Civil War. The Rutledge School for Boys and Girls and a Catholic School at Holy Names of Jesus and Mary Convent were also founded in the 1870's in Tallahassee.³⁰

Florida was still a frontier state in 1880. There was no settlement with even 10,000 souls. The almost 270,000 people were widely scattered.³¹ The growth of public schools was slow in the first decade of their inception (1869-1879). People had little confidence in the Public School System because it was run by the hated Yankees and used mostly by blacks.

Because of the bitterness generated by the Civil War and the Old South tradition that education was a private,

not a public concern, it took almost 20 years for the public school system to become well established in Florida.³²

Most of the private schools during the Reconstruction period were charging reasonable rates which were well within the means of the middle class. The private church schools made private education available to almost anyone who desired it. In 1880, for example, the Ocala Seminary was charging \$1.50 per month for the lowest curriculum, \$2.00 per month for the next level and \$2.50 per month for the highest level. With two three- or four-month terms a year, a child could be sent to a private school for less than \$20.00 per year.³³ After 1884 the growth of public schools accelerated and many children shifted from the private to public schools, which were becoming more standardized as the county school boards took increased interest. New students were moving to the state in large numbers.³⁴

The public schools looked to the private schools for inspiration in curriculum, methods, and textbooks. The curriculum in use in both private and public schools in the years following the Civil War was very dependent on textbooks. Books such as The Independent Child's Speller, The Independent Spelling Book, readers labeled The First Reader, The Second Reader, etc., in arithmetic books such as Davies' Primary,

Davies' Intellectual, Davies' Practical, Elementary Algebra, Universal Algebra, and Monteith's Course in Geography were common to public and private schools.³⁵

Surprisingly, the rapid growth of public schools in the period from 1884-1890 did not discourage some from opening new private schools. These schools offered religious training or high academic standards or both. St. Anthony Parochial School in San Antonio was founded in 1884 with 14 pupils. The school met in the church for its first eight years. In 1892 a large two-story frame building was put up to house students until it was outgrown. It was replaced with a large brick building in 1922 when the school had grown to 100 students.³⁶ The Bradford Institute, a school primarily for girls, run by the Episcopal Church was founded so that by 1890 there were 137 private schools significant enough to be listed in a survey by the State Teachers Association.³⁷ Some of these schools were church affiliated with Methodist, Congregational, Baptist, Catholic, Episcopal, and Christian churches. These schools, according to Kern, were "excellent schools . . . doing a great work for the church and the state, so that when the evercoming population arriving in our State prefers the churchly, religious type of education for their children, we are ready to give it."³⁸ Private schools continued to give Florida citizens an educational choice.

In 1884, there were about 67,000 school-age youth in Florida. Of these, approximately 58,000 were enrolled in the public schools. The remainder were being educated privately or were not in school at all. By 1888 there were 114,000 school-age youth of whom 82,453 were in public schools.³⁹

About this time (1879), the earliest kindergarten in the state was founded in Jacksonville as a private school by Miss Sarah Brewster. This was only 25 years after the establishment of the first kindergarten in the United States. The school had about 20 children from three to seven years of age. The school day was about four hours long. Apparently, the life of the school was short. No records of the school are found after 1880. Another kindergarten was organized in 1885 in DeFuniak Springs. The teacher was Miss Matilda Ross of Chicago Kindergarten Normal. "In 1892 four private kindergartens, six kindergarten teachers, and 119 pupils were listed." Mrs. Thompson's School, a private kindergarten and primary school, was flourishing in Pensacola in 1895. These schools had games, songs, stories, drawing, and physical exercise as their curriculum.⁴⁰ Most of the kindergartens in the state continued to be in private schools until recent years.

After 1890, the growth of private schools was slowed until the 1950's. Gradually, the "old stigma attached to the public school--that the free school was for the poor and lowly--was largely replaced by the general belief in the necessity of democratic and equal educational opportunities for all classes."⁴¹ The new constitution of 1885 had broadened and made permanent the system of public instruction with the emphasis on white schools and very little attention given to schools for blacks. Later, as Florida's population increased to nearly a million by 1920, almost one-third of the people were from other states. They brought their ideas, standards, and ideals about schools with them and "had great influence in advancing (public) education." In 1924, the total public school enrollment was 266,318. The actual school population was 366,930 which indicated that approximately 70,000 children were either in private schools or not attending school at all.⁴²

From 1951 to the present, private school enrollment increased every year except 1954, 1956, and 1958. From 1959 to 1960 the enrollment jumped from 30,000 to 70,000. By the end of the 1960's, more than 107,000 students were in private schools. Of that total, over 30,000 were in Dade County.

In 1959, the number of students in Florida passed the million mark. Thirty thousand were in private schools.

The private schools discussed above were all for white students. Schools for blacks began to operate in Florida after the Civil War. Many of the early schools for freed men and their children were private in the sense that they were funded by churches or concerned individuals and not by the state. By 1866 there were at least 30 private schools for blacks sponsored by groups such as the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the African Civilization Society, the American Freemen's Union, and private individuals. Until 1855, a few private schools had both blacks and whites. Some of the small private schools established by plantation owners educated black slave children along with white children. This practice continued until 1885 when a segregation law was passed making the mixing of the races in schools unlawful.

Almost all of the black colleges in Florida began as private elementary or secondary schools. Cookman Institute in Jacksonville was the first recorded school for blacks in Florida. Florida Institute (est. 1866) at Live Oak became Florida Memorial College. Boylan Home Industrial Training School for girls merged with another school to become Boylan College. Many other private schools became public. Jacksonville Graded School and Stanton Institute of Jacksonville, both founded in 1867, merged to become Stanton Public High

School in 1874. Union Academy in Gainesville, Howard Academy in Ocala, and Hopper Academy in Sanford all became public schools when the segregation law calling for "separate but equal" schools took effect. The American Missionary Association founded a school in Orange Park which educated both races side by side for a time. The Robert Hungerford Normal and Industrial School at Eatonville was founded in 1899.⁴³

The standards, even in private black schools, were different from those of comparable white schools. Many of the black schools were manual training schools--with little academic meat in the curriculum. Often textbooks were old, discarded books from white schools. As late as 1938, white students were averaging 175 school days per year compared to 170 for black students.⁴⁴

Private schools played a big part in the educational system in Florida. They were the forerunners of the public system we know today. The concept of parental rights in the field of education is strongly embedded in the American tradition. Private schools represent the wish of a large and important group of the population to advance the type of education they think best for their children. National, state, and local governments are charged with serving the diverse education needs of a pluralistic society. The public schools

cannot do this alone. The private schools of Florida will continue to be an important part of the education picture in the state.

Establishment and Growth of Private Schools in Dade County

In 1567, two Jesuit missionaries arrived at the mouth of the Sweetwater River. They were the first whites to view a river in an area that is now called by its Indian name-- Miami.⁴⁵ Miami is the Indian word for Sweetwater. The missionaries did not settle in the area, and virtually no white settlers came to stay until around 1830. In 1836 the area was designated Dade County. It originally covered territory from Lake Okeechobee to the Florida Keys. After 1909 the area became Dade, Martin, Broward, and Palm Beach Counties. When Dade was founded, this large area had a population of 134 white settlers.⁴⁶

The population remained small for the next 20 years. In 1850, Dade had fewer than 25 children between the ages of 2 and 18 years of age. The population of the Miami area was less than 190 souls, most of whom were soldiers stationed at Ft. Dallas at the mouth of the Miami River. By 1860 Ft. Dallas had been abandoned and the population had dropped to 83 people. A census of Dade County children in 1879 showed "73 children under 16--widely scattered and some too young

for school."⁴⁷ Things did not change much until the 1890's when the population had grown to 257. In 1881 the state superintendent of schools assigned a teacher to the Biscayne Bay region of Dade County. This teacher traveled from place to place teaching children in their homes.⁴⁸ There is some confusion about the location of the first school in Dade County. Part of the confusion is due to the change in county boundaries. According to public school records and other sources, the first school in the county was organized in 1886 on the shores of Lake Worth in what is now Palm Beach County. This school was about 75 miles from present day Dade County, a rather unrealistic distance for travel to school.⁴⁹ Mrs. Harlan Trapp reports that "My husband taught the first school in Dade County which was located in Lemon City." She also states that her mother-in-law "Mrs. Henrietta Trapp was a woman of rare culture and taught the first school in Coconut Grove."⁵⁰ According to school board records, Harlan Trapp did teach for five months at the Lemon City School. He was 18 years old at the time and made \$35.00 a month. The Trapps came to Dade County in 1887. They began teaching that same year. Another pioneer, Mary Barr Monroe, recalls that Miss Flora MacFarlane taught in a one-room schoolhouse in Coconut Grove which later became the first

public school in the area.⁵¹ In any case, the school board minutes list \$550.00 as the total amount spent for schools in Dade County in 1887. Mrs. MacFarlane is not mentioned as her school was originally a private one.⁵²

The curriculum for schools (private and public) in these waning years of the 19th century consisted of Spenserian penmanship, reading, history, grammar, and arithmetic. These were "common" or elementary school subjects; further schooling was not considered necessary in this frontier atmosphere. The buildings, for the most part, consisted of open air classrooms with shutters which were let down during inclement weather. Miss MacFarlane taught her four or five students in a room at the Bay View Inn. On the rare occasions when the temperature dropped below 40 degrees, school was canceled. This practice continued until the late fifties because so few schools in Dade County were heated. Most of the buildings were frame (Dade County Pine) and not too substantial.

The town of Miami consisted of only four or five buildings on the banks of the mangrove-bordered stream known as the Miami River. There were no orange or grapefruit groves and not a single road. Travel was by boat to the two larger settlements nearby: Coconut Grove and Lemon City.⁵³

According to an early Lemon City resident, Dr. John Dupuis, Lemon City had a private school taught by Miss Alice Brickell in 1883. She taught in a one-room shack provided by William Mettair, located at what is now 65th Street and Biscayne Boulevard. Miss Brickell later became the first public school teacher (according to this account) and taught for a year with no salary.⁵⁴ Thelma Peters reports the first school in Palm Beach (Lake Worth) and the next two at Lemon City and Coconut Grove. The two reported in the present Dade County area were presumably public and were not in operation until 1887.⁵⁵

By 1890, Lemon City had a fairly well-established school. It had become one of the first county public schools four years after its inception as a private school. Lemon City was at this time, and until early 1900, the largest settlement in the Miami area. It was incorporated into Miami in 1923. Dade County remained a pioneering frontier until after the First World War. Mrs. John Gilpin writes of her impressions upon docking at Lemon City in 1890:

Entering the Bay they find at Lemon City only a store and several houses built back among the pines. To my delight, I see the dock is full of Indians, 30 of them, with squaws, papooses and camping outfit . . . (I) walk back among the pines and across a settlement made by a German, Malthas, a mother and six children.⁵⁶

The children of this family probably made up a good half of the Lemon City school enrollment. The population of the whole county was still under 900.

Six years later, at the time it was incorporated, the new city of Miami had a population of about 2,000. The first newspaper, the Miami Metropolis, published its first issue on May 15, 1896. There were 10 brick buildings, 3 secret societies, a bank, and an ice factory. The first passenger train had recently arrived on the newly constructed Florida East Coast Railway. The Florida East Coast Railroad built the first school in Dania, north of Miami, to educate the children of their workmen. A lively real estate business was beginning, and the first hardware store (Frank T. Budge) had opened to accommodate the fledging building industry.⁵⁷ There is very little mention of schools during this last decade of the century.

In 1897, the Miami Metropolis reports, on May 21, that "school is out next week." In July, an article states that "W. N. Sheats, State Superintendent of Schools announces summer schools (for whites only) beginning July 12 in Palatka and Orlando to prepare teachers to obtain certificates by examination."⁵⁸ The article further states that applicants must be at least 16 years old and may be already employed

as teachers. Subjects will be taught by "topics" and "teachers may use whatever books they have" for the eight-week course. Using "whatever books you have" was a common practice in all Florida schools until the 1920's. This practice continued in some private schools even after that time. The state teachers examination was quite rigorous and required knowledge of arithmetic, trigonometry, algebra, English grammar, composition, U.S. history, medieval history, physics, botany, spelling, physiology, theory and practice of teaching, civil government, and penmanship. All of this for a \$35.00 a month job!⁵⁹

During the last few years of the century, there is some evidence of interest in private education. An advertisement on August 13, 1897, asks for applicants with "ability to read and write English with facility, knowledge of elements of English grammar, descriptive geography, arithmetic and history of the United States" for Florida Military and Educational Institute at Bartow. It states that one scholarship will be available for a Dade resident. Ads for Rollins College and the "State College" in Lake City also appeared. Public school opened on October 15, 1897, with two teachers, Miss Merritt and Miss Mann, at the Central Miami School with fewer than 100 pupils. There is no report on the Coconut Grove or Lemon City schools.

In September, 1898, an ad for a "Private School" asks all young men interested in a night school to call on Mr. Albert S. Burgess at the schoolhouse. Private school for boys, daily, was also mentioned in the same ad. The day school curriculum included English, branches of arithmetic, business, and music. Mr. Burgess further stated that terms were reasonable. He urged those who were interested to apply at the schoolhouse from 8:30 to 4:00 daily. This ad ran for four weeks in September. It seems as though Mr. Burgess was sharing space with the public school.

Miss Edith Hunter was also advertising a private school at the same time. She stated that her school would run in the "schoolbuilding" until public school term began. Presumably, her school moved to another location when public school opened. Classified ads for other private schools yield very little information. The majority (three or four) appear to be only for music or art.⁶⁰

The turn of the century found Miami in the throes of a yellow fever epidemic where 14 people died. The population of Miami was still around 2,000 and that of Dade County about 5,000. The county still included Palm Beach and the county seat was at Juno, nearer the north part of the county. The Miami end of the county was politically active, however, and

three Miami men were running for county school board in 1900. These three ran on a ticket that pledged to "elevate the standard of the public schools of the county." Small private schools taught in spare rooms at home or in churches were here today, gone tomorrow type operations.⁶¹

By 1904, Miami had its first road (to Coconut Grove), electric lights, a waterworks and sewage disposal, telephones, free mail delivery, three newspapers, two national banks, one state bank, the F.E.C. railroad and the P&O Steamship line, two hardware stores, and a clothing store.⁶² The main industry for Dade County at this time was growing fruits and vegetables for winter markets. Because many children worked in this industry, school terms were shortened. The Miami High School (public) graduated its first class of three students in 1904. The year before, the Pine Knot Camp became the Florida Adirondack School for Boys which was the first private secondary school in the county. This school is still in existence as the Ransom-Everglades School. Another private boys' school had a winter campus in Dade County at the time, but was not named in any sources.

Patty Munroe Catlow, who was born in Coconut Grove in 1900, recalls being educated by her mother and the Calvert School, a correspondence school. Patty says, "It couldn't

have cost much because we never had any money. Mother taught us both for two years, but when brother was old enough he was sent to public school in Coconut Grove and I continued alone."⁶³ Cora Maxwell reports a friend who had been "sent to a Northern state to school."⁶⁴ This was a common practice among affluent families.

The Official Directory, City of Miami for 1904 lists only the Miami Piano and Violin School, the Miami Conservatory, and Florida Adirondack School under private schools. The conservatory taught music, art, dramatic art, Delsarte, drawing, and painting. No teachers, except music teachers, are listed in the professional section.

In 1911, The Central Grammar School (public) was constructed in Miami. This was the first building constructed specifically as a school. The Dade County School System was now serving 782 white students and 282 black students in three white schools and one black school. The county had recently been halved in size with the founding of Palm Beach County. The county at that time encompassed many small towns from the Keys to Fort Lauderdale. These little municipalities were finally consolidated into Greater Miami, which is now synonymous with Dade County, in 1919.

No new private schools were recorded until about 1914. By this time, Miami was beginning to prosper. Truck farms

of oranges, grapefruit, and tomatoes were available for less than \$1,000 an acre.⁶⁵ Miss Julia Harris arrived in Coconut Grove the summer of 1914 and opened a small school with the help of prominent citizens Ralph and Jesse Munroe and Countess Nugent. The school was originally known as the Craig Open Air School and had only three or four pupils in a little cottage in Coconut Grove. It was a day school intended for girls, but little boys attended too, along with their sisters. The present mayor of Miami, Maurice Ferre, went there to kindergarten with his sisters when the school moved next door to the Ferre estate on Brickell Avenue. Craig Open Air School opened in October of 1914 advertising "all grades through high school, modern language by conversational methods, tourist pupils entered for any length of time, home textbooks and a school automobile." By 1917, the school had changed its name to Miss Harris' Open Air School for Girls and was boarding pupils. In 1922, the school moved to its Bayfront location on Brickell Avenue. The new, open air pavilions were a popular type of school construction in a time before air-conditioning. This highly acclaimed school was a part of the Miami scene until 1957 when it moved to Stuart, Florida. Julia Harris continued as owner and headmistress until she was 94 years old.⁶⁶

Dade County retained its pioneer flavor until World War I. Seminole Indians were common visitors, there were few roads, and hastily constructed frame buildings were the rule. Ruth Robbins Beardsley recalls going to take the County Teachers' Examination in 1916. She speaks of two weeks of testing covering close to 20 subjects including orthography and agriculture. Applicants were required to furnish their own pens and paper for the rigorous exam.⁶⁷ Not all teachers took the test. Many early private school teachers did, so that they could advertise their schools as "certified."

Following the war, the population of Dade County began to increase rapidly, leading to the land "boom" of the twenties. The population multiplied more than five times in the decade between 1910 and 1920. The public school system experienced a long series of problems due to this influx of people. School buildings were overcrowded even before construction was completed. Materials were in short supply. Schools were forced to use double sessions and classrooms with 50 or 60 children and one teacher were common. The combination of population growth and affluence that was causing many of the public school problems resulted in the development of at least a dozen private schools.⁶⁸

As the "boom" began in the early twenties, money was readily available, real estate prices soared, casinos and clubs sprang up and Miami became the rumrunners' capital where bootlegging was considered a "respectable" crime. Fortunes were made and lost--people were looking for ways to invest their money. For many, private schools were a social adjunct to a lifestyle that had been available to only a few before boomtime.⁶⁹

By 1921, Miss Harris' Open Air School and Florida Adirondack School found competition from the Montmare School, the Children's Educational Playschool, the Baldwin-Hall School, Lake Placid Day School, and the Biscayne Bay School.

The fall of 1921 was marked by heavy financial problems in the public schools. On Friday, October 7, the public schools were ordered closed for lack of funds. There were suggestions that the system be turned over to a corporation which would run it as a tuition based system. The kindergartens in public schools were already charging tuition. On Saturday, October 8, a group of businessmen convinced the city bankers to loan the school system \$20,000 so that schools could open on Monday. There were over 50 children in some of the classes. All elementary and junior high schools were on double sessions with a morning and afternoon group. Many public school teachers quit the troubled system to open their own small schools.⁷⁰

In 1922, the public school again opened with overcrowded conditions and on double sessions. Tuition was being charged for nonresident students. High school students were billed \$8.00 per month and elementary students had to pay \$4.00 a month.⁷¹ It is easy to see why the private schools catered to tourist children who numbered in the thousands. For the same fee, or a few dollars more, private schools could offer small classes, individual attention, and, in many cases, more modern facilities.

The private schools usually ran a seven-month term designed with the tourist child in mind. Miss Bertha McConkey, director of the Biscayne Bay Private School, announced the 1922 term would begin on October 30 and run for seven months. This school was located in Miramar (Bayside, just north of today's 20th Street) and offered French to all grades and kindergarten along with drawing and industrial arts. The school's philosophy advocated "doing rather than telling" and "play interest in work." St. Catherine's School, Miss Harris' Open Air School, Montmare, Baldwin-Hall, Educational Play School, Lake Placid, and Florida Adirondack schools all opened in mid or late October. This was usually a few weeks after public school opening.⁷²

Miss Kate Colyer, who was the proprietor of the Colyer School, was the former principal of the Northside School

(public) and a director of the Miami Kindergarten and Primary Normal School. She began her school in the fall of 1922 with a philosophy emphasizing "happiness, culture, scholarship and Americanism." The course of study pursued included English, music, art, nature study, storytelling, folk dancing, and outdoor games. This school was located about three blocks from the Biscayne Bay School. Miss Colyer continued to be a force in public school decision making even though she was running a private school.

Baldwin-Hall was advertising a curriculum "similar to public school" with French, penmanship, expression, art, and singing added. The Sisters of St. Joseph were running the first parochial school in Dade County in Coral Gables that same year. Their school, St. Catherine's was a boarding school and college for young women. The Children's Educational Play School directed by Kate Ellis Wise was teaching English and French to pupils aged 3-6. An unidentified private school advertised for students in Riverside in grades K-5. Other classified ads listed schools for dancing, music, and tutoring.

The kindergartens had been financed partly by the county which provided building space and materials and partly from tuition. Because of continuing financial difficulties, this arrangement was terminated in 1923. Several

of the public school kindergarten teachers opened their own kindergartens or elementary schools which included kindergartens. Miss Alice Patterson announced that she had "opened a private class for a few select pupils, all grades, at 315 N.E. Second Avenue." Laura Cushman and Julia St. John opened the small Park Primary School at 2132 N.E. Second Avenue at the same time.

In 1923, Miami had greyhound racing, dancing on several oceanside piers, movie houses, minstrel and vaudeville shows, casinos, and supper clubs. The boom was in full swing. Street addresses were required for mail delivery for the first time. Tourism was an established industry, as was land speculation. Public school attendance was 11,733. The following year, public school attendance jumped to 18,000.⁷³ It was impossible for the school board to keep pace with this phenomenal growth. Private schools took up the slack. The Cushman School opened at 337 N.E. 38th Terrace in the fall of 1924. An open air school for students from kindergarten through junior high, the school advertised modern equipment and free transportation. This school will be discussed at greater length in subsequent chapters. Miami Military Academy was also founded in 1924. It was located in Coral Gables and later moved to 10 acres on the Bay in suburban

Miami Shores. It was an accredited school with an average of 10 boys per class and an outstanding athletic program until the early seventies when the property was sold to developers. Quayside luxury condominiums are now located on the site.⁷⁴

On Miami Beach, the Montmare School, a boarding school for girls and coed day school continued to do well with George C. Grimm as headmaster. The Coburn County Day School was established on Miami Beach in 1926 and was a highly respected school for over 30 years. Boomtime continued into 1925. Miami now had three bridges over the Miami River, a jockey club, a racetrack at Hialeah, trolleys, buses, fine hotels and restaurants, and unprecedented prosperity. According to Isidor Cohen, "Seminole Indians, snakes, wildcats, flying roaches, red ants and horseflies were things of the past." Even the Everglades (a swamp) was selling for \$2.00 an acre. A small house rented for \$600.00 a month and a furnished room \$400.00 a month.⁷⁵

The "boom" ended abruptly with the hurricane of September, 1926. More than buildings came tumbling down with those fierce winds. The destruction was so extensive that many northern papers predicted Miami would become a ghost town. The city was in ruins. Homeless people searched for

food and water. The main street looked like a yacht basin. Before that disaster was cleaned up, Miami was brushed by a second hurricane in October. The "boom" was over--the "bust" was here.⁷⁶

Surprisingly, new private schools continued to open after the boom. Most of the established private schools were able to stay in business. Many of the tourists left and the regular winter visitors did not come for the 1926-1927 season. The Playhouse and Biltmore School opened near Coral Gables in 1926. Helen Mansfield opened her Pelican Nursery and Kindergarten in the early thirties on Miami Beach and Dr. C. C. Carson opened the Carson Tropic School on Washington Avenue in 1930. Dr. Carson came to Miami in 1926 as head of Miami Beach Public Schools and decided to open his school especially for tourist children. The Mary M. Black School, which was founded in Jacksonville in 1918, moved to Miami and became established near the end of the boom. This school was one of the few Dade County schools either public or private to teach Spanish, which was offered in all grades 1-9. The school had an enrollment of about 50 students in 1936. Edith H. Gallagher was another courageous individual who founded a school after the boom was over. She founded the Sunshine School in 1926 for children aged 4-14.⁷⁷

Also operating in the early thirties, the Mannheimer Private School in Miami Beach was started by two sisters who had studied at Columbia Teachers College and traveled all over the world to study foreign educational methods. This was a relatively large school with nearly 40 staff members.

Other schools founded in the thirties included the Normandy Day and Resident School, Miami School of Applied Arts, Miami County Day and Resident School, Bellmore Tutoring Studio, Boulevard Boarding School, Exmoor School, Frances Morang Day and Night Play School, Gulliver School, Miami School for Girls, Ken Castle School, Lear School, and Bro-Reese School. Catholic private schools were educating about 1,500 students in five schools in the thirties. Gesu, St. Theresa, and St. Patrick's had joined St. Catherine's and St. Joseph's by 1937.⁷⁸ Ken Castle School started operating in 1932 in Coral Gables. The philosophy of this school was a "highly individualized program for each child based on a careful study of his personality." The Ken Castle School was for children from nursery through 4th grade with "coaching through 5th grade." The Bro-Reese School was another Coral Gables private school located at Irvington Avenue. The Gulliver School is still in existence, although it has changed owners and location. The Lear School, founded as an outdoor day and resident school for nursery through 12th

grade on Miami Beach, has also changed location and owners. The school is now located in Miami Shores and run by the original owner's daughter-in-law. Ida R. Lear founded the school to offer a "cultural, home environment" in the thirties and boasted a wonder for a school of that era--a swimming pool!⁷⁹

Some of these schools did not last long and left scant evidence of their existence. Others are still operating. The Miami Country Day and Resident School for Boys opened in 1938 in Miami Shores with nine boys. This school was founded by a former Dade County teacher and principal, L. B. Sommers, and his friend, C. W. "Doc" Abele. They were the only teachers that first year. Mrs. Sommers was cook and house-mother to the nine boys who boarded. This school became coed in 1972 and expanded to include a high school in 1979. It dropped boarding students in 1975. It is still in existence at its original location, although it is now owned by the Presbyterian Church.⁸⁰

Dade County had over 33,000 students in 41 public elementary schools in 1937. The school enrollment fluctuated as much as five or six thousand pupils during the course of the year as tourists came down for the winter and entered their children in school. According to the Teacher of Dade

County, about 10 percent of the local children were in private schools with a much higher but undetermined percentage of tourist children being educated privately. The public school system recognized the help that the private schools gave them. The Teacher of Dade County, published by the Public School Teachers Association, said in October, 1936:

Dade County, Miami and Miami Beach are fortunately endowed with private schools--schools to fill the requirements of varied types of educational advancement and the needs of different people and their children.⁸¹

And in September, 1936, when the entire issue was devoted to private schools:

The private schools in the Greater Miami area are a credit to Miami. They are something which our citizens have a just right to be proud of, as they rank highly with those in cities throughout the country. Although public schools serve the greater masses of our youth, the private schools fill a most important and valued need on account of varied reasons which make it more advisable for some students to attend them rather than public institutions. Miami is fortunate in having so many excellent private schools and they are well attended by children from kindergarten age to those ready to go to college.⁸²

Of the 41 public elementary schools in Dade County, only 17 were accredited by the state; Cushman was one of the few private schools accredited. The public schools were using semi-annual promotion in the twenties and thirties which meant students could begin school in January and also advance to the next grade at this time. This made it necessary to

have two sections of each grade. Special promotions were also made by using tests and/or teacher recommendations. This type of promotion could be used to advance the gifted student, or to get the backward student out of the lower grade to which he was relegated by his performance. Private schools followed the same system for the most part, although they were usually more likely to advance the gifted student. The course of study for public and private schools in the twenties and thirties was very similar. Most private schools adhered to the curriculum adopted by the state in 1918 and in use in Dade County until the late thirties. This curriculum is printed in its entirety in Appendix A. Private schools supplemented this curriculum with industrial or manual arts, folk dancing, drama, modern languages (especially French), and a consistent philosophy of individual attention.

The range of subjects in the regular elementary curriculum is amazing, including such subjects as "handwork" and "morals and manners" at every grade level. The state did not mandate kindergarten, so there is no curriculum listed for that level. Dade County teachers wrote their own kindergarten curriculum in the years that the county sponsored kindergartens. This kindergarten curriculum was written by

Laura Cushman, Kate Colyer, and Kate Wise, who also ran a kindergarten normal school in the afternoon to train kindergarten and primary teachers. All three of these women founded private schools with kindergartens.

Dade County made few changes in the state-adopted curriculum of 1918. By 1927, "morals and manners" had become "citizenship" and "handwork" was "art-crafts." Appendix B is a full list of the Dade County curriculum of 1927.

Private and public schools in the county made few changes through the forties and early fifties. In 1940, "Safety Education" was added to the state curriculum and required in every public elementary school. This trend was followed in most private schools. The war years saw a curriculum interest on patriotism, support for American institutions and even such nonacademic pursuits as gardening and canning to help the war effort. Again, the private schools followed the state and county lead. Overall, the curriculum remained the same until the fifties when Sputnik changed the educational focus for a generation.

The main change, other than curriculum, was in the organization of the schools. Until 1923, Dade County schools were separated into grammar or elementary and high schools. Grammar school had kindergarten and grades 1 through 8. The high schools handled grades 9 through 12. In 1923, the

6-3-3 plan went into effect. This was a very innovative plan in which junior high became the buffer school between elementary and high school. The private schools did not follow this plan and had various combinations of grades; K-6, K-8, K-9, 1-5, K-12, etc. The parochial schools kept the grammar school/high school plan and are still using it today. Other private schools continue to use various combinations.

The private school scene remained relatively static from the late thirties until after World War II. The early fifties saw another population explosion in Dade County with the concomitant problems of funding and overcrowding in the public schools. Student membership in private schools in Dade County increased from 4,925 in 1951 to 7,764 in 1958. By 1960, that figure had grown to 24,523. This jump of close to 20,000 students in 10 years meant that a large number of private schools came into existence during that time. Many of these private schools were founded as a result of the influx of Cuban exiles which began in 1959. Several private Cuban Schools simply relocated in Miami. Belen Jesuit Prep School and Rodriquez Villarreal School are among the relocated Cuban Schools. Both are thriving with excellent academic reputations at this writing. The Cuban immigrants who came in the first wave of refugees were mostly wealthy, upper-class people who were used to sending

their children to private schools in Cuba and they continued the practice when they settled in Miami. Many Catholic and Spanish language schools were started here in the sixties to accommodate the ever growing number of exiles who made Miami their home.

The court ordered enforcement of integration and busing to achieve it fostered the growth of still more private schools in the sixties. The 1965-66 Nonpublic School Directory lists 63 private schools in Dade County. This is not a comprehensive list, but only reflects the schools which were registered with accrediting agencies, a list of which can be found in Appendix C. By 1968, over 30,000 students were in private schools in the county. In 1973, there were 165 schools listed in the Directory. Of the 163 schools listed, 153 had kindergartens or elementary grades. By 1981, there were 280 private schools serving over 50,000 students in Dade County. These private schools were extremely varied, ranging from Catholic, Jewish, Baptist, Christian Scientist, and Seventh Day Adventist Church-affiliated schools to Spanish language schools where English is taught only as a second language for a short period each day. Close to half of the private schools in Dade County are church affiliated. The rest, with the exception of about a dozen nonprofit

schools, are proprietary. The Cushman School is one of the nonprofit, nonchurch-affiliated schools.

NOTES

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³ J. Appleyard, The Beginning of Education: Escambia County, Florida, 1763-1912, Monograph (n.p.: n.d.), Florida International University Library, n. pg.

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CHAPTER III

HISTORY OF THE CUSHMAN SCHOOL

Biography of Laura Cushman

The Cushman School reflects the personality and character of its founder, Laura Cushman. It would not be possible to study the school without knowing something about the woman who founded it.

Miami was a small frontier town in 1913 when Laura Cushman arrived to teach at the Coconut Grove School. The few paved roads were brilliant white because of the limestone used as a roadbed. Laura Cushman came from Iowa with her family and went to work for the Dade County Public School System teaching second grade for \$60.00 a month. Thus, she embarked on a 70-year career in education that made her one of the most respected educators in the state.

Laura Cushman was a member of a remarkable family; remarkable because of their devotion to education in a time and place when education, especially for women, was not highly valued. Both of her parents came from families where most of the members were college educated. Her father, Albert J. Cushman, was born in 1847 and grew up to be a seed farmer near Marcus, Iowa, where Laura was born. He married

Elizabeth and together they had seven children, six of whom lived to adulthood. Arthur, 1883; Edith, 1885; Laura, 1887; Charles, 1889; Lucy, 1891; Harold, 1895; and Laurence, 1897; were all born on the farm. Only Harold stayed on the farm. There is some confusion about Laura's birthday. She reports it as November 1, 1887, but the family Bible lists it as November 1, 1886. According to Laura, the Bible is wrong.¹

All of the Cushman children worked on the farm. Laura remembers her job as gathering the eggs and feeding the chickens and says she never learned to milk a cow. The children began their education at home with their mother and soon moved on to the one-room schoolhouse nearby. Laura remembers her first day of school very well--she fell in a bucket of plaster being used by workmen who were hastily finishing the building as the students arrived. The school served about 10 children from three farm families. Half of the students were Cushmans. When the three oldest Cushman children had exhausted the resources of the teacher and the school, their father sold his farm and moved the family to Sioux City, Iowa, so that his children might attend Morningside College. At that time, this Methodist college included an academy or high school section. Fifteen-year-old Laura was an excellent student and, after finishing the academy, went on to take a Bachelor of Arts degree from Morningside

College. She earned her tuition by giving piano lessons. She had never given any thought to becoming a schoolteacher, expecting to "just marry and have babies." Anyway, education courses were not available at Morningside and girls interested in becoming teachers usually studied at a normal school for two years. Everyone at Morningside took a liberal arts program. Laura and her siblings were much involved in all aspects of life at Morningside. She reports that she started a club and held many campus offices. Her brother Charles, who was editor of the school paper for two years and also a correspondent for the Sioux City Daily News, appreciated her help with his extracurricular activities. All of the Cushmans sang in the choir and did church work. Laura graduated in 1911 and was awarded an honorary Doctor of Law degree from Morningside in 1941.² The certificate read: "In recognition of her outstanding work in the field of education, particularly in the humanizing of schoolroom procedures and the specific provision for character development."³

Brothers Arthur and Charles moved to Miami in 1911 and bought land near Hialeah on which to farm. They grew vegetables for a year before poor markets and freighting problems made the venture a failure. The farm was sold; Arthur

headed to Boston for a job with the YMCA, and Charles went to work for the Miami Metropolis. In his travels as a reporter, Charles heard that the school in Coconut Grove was looking for a teacher. He wired Laura that the position was available and that she had better "come down and get it." She did. The Cushman family moved to Miami with Laura. Her sister Lucy became a teacher in Dade County the following year and eventually became the state director for domestic science (home economics). The family immediately became involved in the activities of the new city. Albert Cushman began a very successful real estate business. Mother Elizabeth became involved in church and civic work. She was president of the White Temple Methodist Church Women's Guild for over 20 years establishing a "Good Will" shop for indigents which is still in existence.⁴ In 1925, Isidor Cohen in his Historical Sketches and Sidelights of Miami said of her: "Credit for successful community drives is, in a large measure, due to the group of enterprising women (led) by Mrs. A. J. Cushman."⁵

Charles directed the choir at White Temple for an astounding 61 years. Charles and his father were both active in the Miami Kiwanis Club for which Charles served as executive secretary for many years. The Cushmans were also

active in the Miami Civic Music Association with Charles serving as treasurer for almost 40 years. Lucy left for Tallahassee where she married and is living today. One brother went to California and another to Oregon. Charles married and remained in Miami until his death in 1978.⁶ Laura lived with her parents in a house her father built. She still lives there. Albert Cushman died in 1927 and Elizabeth in 1955. Laura has lived alone since her mother died.⁷

Laura Cushman began teaching in a town where a five-room frame bungalow on two lots could be had for \$500 and a 10-acre citrus grove for \$6,500. The 17-year-old settlement was located on crystal clear Biscayne Bay where fishing and boating were everyday affairs. The first wooden bridge across the Bay to Miami Beach had just been completed. The overseas railroad to Key West was one-year old. Flagler's luxurious Royal Palm Hotel with 600 rooms was a social center of the town along with the Biscayne Bay Yacht Club. Most of the buildings were frame or native coral rock. The main street boasted two hardware stores, a grocery, clothing store, two banks, two livery stables, and the Ye Wee Tappy Tavern. Seminole Indians were common sights walking the streets or paddling their dugout canoes on the Miami River. James Deering's fabulous Villa Vizcaya was under construction

employing a thousand Miamians or about one-tenth of the population.⁸ The plantation bell used to call the construction workers on this job now hangs as a school bell on the roof of the Cushman School.⁹

Laura was asked to add music and domestic science to her teaching load. The second graders went home early, so the afternoon was given over to music and domestic science for the older children. Music posed no problem as Laura had had plenty of training in that area. She felt she knew little or nothing about domestic science, but was willing to give it a try. She taught her children to sew. She had learned how to sew early so she could make her own clothes and avoid dressing just like her sisters. Her mother made three of every dress in graduated sizes, and Laura never liked this practice. She still makes all of her own clothes. She says she taught the Coconut Grove girls how to "make lovely dresses--but not much else." After her first year of teaching, she felt "The big lesson that I learned was that I did not know how to teach." She remedied that situation by joining her brother in Boston and attending Wheelock College, a normal school, for two years. She worked as a mother's helper to earn her board while she was in school and worked summers in a settlement house to pay for her tuition.

Laura returned to Miami in 1916 and began to teach kindergarten at the Riverside School. She remained at Riverside for five years. At that time, there were only three kindergarten classes in Miami. Each one had up to 90 students with one teacher. She and two other teachers organized the Miami Kindergarten and Primary Teachers Normal School to train more teachers. Since kindergarten was over at noon, they ran their school in the afternoons. They also formed the Miami Kindergarten Association which eventually would run the kindergartens for the county.¹⁰

In 1920, the school board felt they did not have the funds to continue the kindergartens. Laura worked out a plan with the Kindergarten Association and the school board sharing the expense. The Association charged parents \$1.00 per month for each child. When the schools were closed for lack of funds in 1921, the kindergartens were able to remain open. The school board tried again in 1922 to close the kindergartens saying they needed the classroom space being used by them. Laura Cushman campaigned to keep them open by speaking all over town to civic groups such as the Rotary and Kiwanis Clubs. She won a one-year reprieve but the kindergartens were gone when public school opened in 1923.¹¹

Laura could not live with that decision. She and a friend, Julia St. John, opened a small school for

kindergarten, first, second, and third graders on the front porch of the Cushman home at 2132 N.E. Second Avenue. The tuition was \$20.00 per month. The school was called the Park Primary School and opened with 12 students.¹² It was successful, but St. John was more interested in a tutorial school, so she dropped out at the end of the first year. Laura decided what she had in mind was too much for her parent's front porch. She borrowed money from her father in the spring of 1924 and bought property at 336 N.E. 38th Street. Here, she built three "little open air shacks"¹³ with screens for walls and opened the Cushman School. It was well attended even that first year. It was located in the residential area of Magnolia Park, but people came from all over Miami because Laura's reputation as an excellent teacher and her philosophy of "character development and academic excellence" were good drawing cards. The school had three teachers, one for each building. There was a large yard, surrounded by a private hedge, for the children to play.¹⁴

Laura continued her education in the summers, going to Columbia Teacher's College for postgraduate work in 1922 and again in 1923. She took classes in early childhood education and was rapidly becoming an expert. She also spent a

summer at the University of California at Berkeley. In 1940, she worked for the summer on a paper on character development at New York University.¹⁵

In 1928, Laura was invited to be an associate professor at the School of Education at Florida State College for Women in Tallahassee--the present day Florida State University. She accepted and went to Tallahassee for eight weeks at a salary of \$400.00. She taught four hours a day and worked in the demonstration school. Laura and Mae Knight Clark, one of her teachers, returned to teach the summer of 1929. The following summer, Laura was asked to restructure the demonstration school and to remain as a full-time professor at the college. She did improve the demonstration school, but she declined the offer of becoming a professor. She and Mae Knight Clark collaborated on a series of arithmetic books (The Self Help Number Series) which were published by MacMillan Company, the royalties from which she later used to pay off a mortgage on her school. The books, published in 1935, sold over 100,000 copies. As a result of her work in Tallahassee, she was elected to Kappa Delta Pi Honor Society and became an active member. She continued to teach at the college in the summers in 1931, '32, '34, '37, and '38. In 1931, she taught "Principles

of Reading" and "Theory and Practice of Elementary Education."¹⁶

Dean Nathan Salley of the College of Education came to visit Cushman School in 1933. He was so impressed with Laura and the school that he again asked Laura to visit the demonstration school and give him her reactions and suggestions for improving it. She sent Dr. Salley a list of ideas with which she was experimenting in her own school in September of that year. She felt that they might be successful in the lab school in Tallahassee. Among the suggestions she went him were the following:

1. A character education program which includes a grading system based entirely on character traits and excluding academic marks.
2. The contract system.
3. The use of self-teaching materials for purpose of developing independence, initiative, and sound thinking.
4. Specific provisions for the development of poise and the well-integrated individual personalities which must underly its attainment.
5. Creative work.
6. Development of the happy attitude which should

be the natural one for all--young and old--who
live richly and well.

She had been using most of these ideas in her school since its inception. Some of them were incorporated in the lab school at Florida State College.¹⁷

In the summer of 1934, Laura returned to Tallahassee to teach Education 202 and 203. She asked to be allowed to choose the textbooks for the course. She chose Yoakam's The Improvement of the Assignment and Washburne's Adjusting the School to the Child. This incident points up two aspects of her personality. She was very well read in her field and was constantly evaluating new texts and materials. She always urged her teachers to do the same and insisted that every teacher belong to a professional organization and read its journal regularly. The other aspect is evident in her choice of Adjusting the School to the Child. She was an early advocate of child centered education. In her school, the child was the school. She was totally devoted to the idea of a child centered curriculum and this was one of the reasons her school was so successful at its inception.¹⁸

For the next three summers, Laura had to turn down the invitation to teach in Tallahassee. She returned the summer of 1939. Her salary had increased only to \$475 with an

apology from the president of the college explaining that funds were very short for summer school. Although she continued to be a correspondent of the school of education, 1939 was her last summer in Tallahassee. "The relationship of correspondent was for the purpose of cooperating in the study of educational experiments and procedures."¹⁹

Cushman School was prospering and gaining a statewide reputation as an excellent, innovative school. In 1933, the school and Laura were written up in the Christian Science Monitor. The article, which appeared on October 28, 1933, praised the unique program of character development, the contract system and grading system. The article also commented on the lovely setting and joyous atmosphere found at the school.²⁰

In 1935, the Business and Professional Women honored Laura as an outstanding member. On receiving this honor, she said that "Love of work is the main essential in a successful career." She was elected to Delta Kappa Gamma Women Educators' Honor Society in 1943. She was a founding member of the Zonta Club and the Civic Music Association. She sang in the choir and worked in the guild at White Temple Methodist Church.²¹

In 1947, Laura was asked to participate in the statewide Southern Association Cooperative Study on Education in

Tallahassee. She also became a member of the Association for Childhood Education. In 1936, she spoke to their convention on "Available materials for Use in the Primary Grades." She was instrumental in starting the Private Schools Association of Dade County and a founder and life director of the Florida Council of Independent Schools. Her work has been honored by all of these organizations.²²

In 1957, she was one of six women in the state to be honored by the Florida Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs for outstanding achievements in the field of education. She was broadcasting on a regular basis on the educational radio station in Miami during this period.²³ The Zonta Club paid tribute to her in 1978, extolling her "philosophy and affectionate attitude which have permeated the accomplishments and success of the students who have been under her leadership." She has also been honored by the Miami Shores Chamber of Commerce, Delta Kappa Gamma, Epsilon Chapter, and the Miami Herald. The Herald featured her in an article on fascinating senior citizens who continued to work after retirement age. She was 75 at the time.²⁴ She continued working as principal for another 12 years. Laura has been featured many times in the Herald and the Miami News for her innovative work in education. She

was recently featured on the television show PM Magazine and has been included in a book about outstanding Miami women, Julia's Daughters.²⁵

Her philosophy of education has remained steadfast through 70 years of work in the field. She believes in teaching children how to think for themselves. She is a firm believer in educational innovation and is delighted with the new computers for students which have recently been installed at her school. She is not easily led away from sound principal by flashy, progressive ideas which are not based in theory. When the look/say method of teaching reading was very popular and phonics was thought to be obsolete, she instructed her teachers to continue teaching reading with the phonics method but to call it "word analysis." She thinks that children do not need cookies, candy, and soda pop, so those items are forbidden at her school except for special parties. She thinks every child can be successful at something and that it is the teacher's duty to find that something.²⁶

She is a poet, who describes a bayside scene thusly: "The little mangrove trees are sticking their toes out," and finds joy in the beauty of each new day.²⁷ She enjoys working in her garden and communing with nature. She has the feeling that every family should have the choice of public

or private school and has given many, many scholarships to children whose families chose her school but were unable to afford it. She has always said her school catered to the middle-class family and that "the wealthy children always went to that other school (Miss Harris')." She did not have a dress code at her school and only put the students in uniforms when the label craze came in saying "children at school should have better things on their minds than whose name is on a shirt."²⁸ She worked hard to make her school a loving, happy place for students and teachers. In a letter to parents she said:

Our first aim is that all teachers and pupils in our school should preserve a happy attitude. We believe that a well child whose environment is conducive to character development and intellectual growth is a happy child. If a child is not happy, we will seek the underlying causes without ceasing until he or she is adjusted satisfactorily.²⁹

In a recent interview, she added, "We tried to have every child feel that he was somebody and that he could do things, and that would give him power within himself to do the very best."³⁰

She is still active in the affairs of the school, serving as president of the Board of Directors. She comes to the monthly programs and checks up by telephone at least once a week.³¹ She says of her long career as an educator: "Those were the happiest years of my life, working with children."³²

Laura Cushman stated her educational philosophy in the very first brochure for her school:

A school seeks to develop the child mentally, physically and in character growth. To do this the child must be placed in happy, surroundings, be properly adjusted to his work, and have wholesome participation in living experiences. The creation of such a school life is our aim.³³

She succeeded in creating such a school. The philosophy of the school has not changed in its almost 60 years of existence.

The Early Years

The Cushman School was founded in 1924, with three teachers and three small buildings at 337 N.E. 38th Street. The original curriculum has been lost, but it is known that the school followed the state and county curriculum very closely so that students who transferred back and forth would not have difficulty. The first year, the school had less than 100 students.³⁴

Prior to opening of her school, Laura Cushman was interviewed for the Miami News. She told the reporter: "My aim is to offer first-class scholastic training in a healthful and beautiful atmosphere. Everything for the children is our motto and desire. The platoon or group, system of training will be employed. In general, we are always seeking something better."³⁵ The atmosphere at the new school was both

healthful and beautiful. Much of the work was conducted outdoors in a garden patio. The buildings themselves were screened shelters which let in the fresh air breezes. This type of building lent itself to nature appreciation, in Laura's words, "At any class my pupils may gain inspiration from nature, for clouds are framed by each window and mocking-birds haunt the trees outside." There were no desks in the school, only child-size tables and chairs. School began at 8:45 and ended for kindergarten at noon and for the grades at 2:45. In addition to the regular public school curriculum, manual arts, nature study, music, and physical education were taught. Nature study was given a great deal of emphasis. The school grounds had an abundance of wild flowers and many types of birds. Insects also received attention--and were plentiful. The students spent a large portion of the day out of doors collecting specimens and playing.³⁶

The platoon system of training used is similar to the cross grouping of today. Groups or platoons of students were sent to art, music, physical education, or folk dancing while the other students remained with the classroom teacher for small group instruction. This system is still in use at the school.³⁷

No homework was permitted except for special projects approved by the principal. Because pupils contracted with

the teacher for the type and amount of work to be done each day, it was felt that better work habits and use of time could be accomplished with the "no homework" policy. Students who did not fulfill their contracts had to take home the remaining work.³⁸

Plays and pageants were an integral part of the school program. The school policy was to include every child as a performer in these affairs. This is still the policy. The 1924 school year saw the primary grades putting on "Flower Carnival," where the students took the parts of "garden flowers, wild flowers, and bugs." The intermediate grades performed an operetta "The Rose Dream." The entire enrollment of 85 children took part in the annual Spring Festival which was directed by Mrs. Willard Brown. Mrs. Brown was also in charge of "physical culture" at the school. The Spring Festival program was actually a Maypole Dance. The philosophy behind the performances was to help the child gain confidence by frequently performing in front of an audience. For many years, the school conducted special assembly programs every Friday.³⁹

The kindergarten remained Laura Cushman's favorite age group. In 1925, students in her kindergarten were having music, including singing, listening and rhythm activities; literature and language through stories and conversation;

industrial and fine arts through drawing, painting, construction, weaving, clay modeling and cutting shapes; dramatic art; and health, citizenship, and nature study which were "incidental to all activities of the day, being taught through situations as they arise."⁴⁰

Within a year after its opening, the school was outgrowing its three, one-room buildings. Biscayne Boulevard was being built and slated to go right through the school's property. Laura Cushman was not eager to move her two-year-old school. She was offered a large sum of money which her father advised her to take and use to build a bigger and better school. That is exactly what she did. She bought property out in the suburbs on Potomac Circle (later 60th Street) in a new residential area near her house.⁴¹

The New Building

According to the building permit application filed on June 17, 1926, the Cushman School was to be built on two lots in the Bayshore subdivision. It was to be a \$35,000, two-story, concrete block building. Laura gave her ideas to architect Russell Skipton who designed the building according to her specifications. The new building was in the Spanish style with two wings in a V shape around a central patio. The second floor had a balcony and open hallways. It was designed so that every classroom would get cross

ventilation. The original ten rooms housed two offices, a large assembly room, and seven classrooms. The school had a Spanish tile roof and oak hardwood floors.⁴² The work on the school went on all summer. Laura worked on landscaping the grounds, planting trees and shrubs. The not-quite finished building was put to a severe test on September 17 when a disastrous hurricane hit Miami. Only minor damage was sustained and school was ready to open in October. New tables and chairs, blackboards, and playground equipment were ready for students on opening day. The tuition was \$15 a month for preschool and primary grades and \$20 a month for grades 3-6. Transportation was \$4.00 a month extra. All supplies and books were furnished. The school had no kitchen, so pupils either brought their lunches or went home for lunch.⁴³

In 1926, there were only 17 accredited elementary schools in Miami. Only one of those, Buena Vista, was near the Cushman School. Only eight public elementary schools had a "superior" rating from the state. The Cushman School had a "superior" rating for all of the years that the state accredited private schools.⁴⁴

The curriculum at Cushman closely followed the Dade County curriculum. The Bible was read every morning and the

students said "grace" before eating. Arithmetic, reading, penmanship, Florida history and U.S. history, spelling, and geography were taught at Cushman using much the same materials used in public schools. The more interesting curriculum additions were phonics, French, gardening, calisthenics, and manual training. Manual training met twice a week and concentrated on shop work. Children were also taught sportsmanship, kindness, social attitudes, reliability, and good citizenship. These areas were given grades on the students' permanent record cards along with the grades in content areas.

The innovations at the Cushman School were found more in method than content. Creativity was encouraged. The teachers were expected to come up with their own materials to supplement the textbooks. Students were encouraged to write poetry; write, direct, and act in plays; write and publish a school newspaper; and write and perform songs; design and paint scenery for the plays, and ask penetrating questions. These activities were guided by certified teachers and professional people who were experts in their field. The reputation of the school was greatly enhanced by the quality of the teachers and other professionals who worked for Laura Cushman. Catherine Allison Christie, who

was a consummate musician and had been a professor of music at DePauw University, was the music teacher for more than 20 years. She wrote many songs and operettas for children which were published and used in public and private schools all over the country. Her choirs and choruses were in great demand for performances at many city functions and radio programs. These student groups won statewide acclaim at competitions for many years. Buna Edwards, an artist, taught that subject at Cushman until her death in 1944. She had a national reputation for her work and a statewide reputation for the "Living Picture" programs she directed at Cushman. Edna Sortelle was another outstanding teacher in the early days. She was a dance instructor who brought her talents to the school. These women coordinated an arts program for Cushman School that was innovative and of excellent quality.⁴⁵

The new building had an outdoor stage and gymnastic pergola. This was used for the many programs the school produced. The grounds also had a fish pond, trees for climbing, and a vegetable garden. The students grew vegetables, made butter, learned to sew, made and searched for Seminole Indian artifacts, put on plays in French and English, performed on radio and became involved in civic events. They worked with their teachers to plan what work they wanted to do each week.⁴⁶

Although the school had started with a junior high, the upper three grades were dropped with the move to the new building. The junior high would be reinstated in the thirties. As the depression became nationwide, the Cushman School continued to prosper.⁴⁷

The Depression

The depression was not a serious problem for the Cushman School. Apparently, most of the patrons were engaged in work that was little effected by the state of the national economy. Miami was in better shape than the rest of Florida and was showing signs of recovery by 1934.

The Cushman School opened in 1932 with the largest enrollment in its eight-year history. The character development program and contract system had been tried in 1930 and 1931 and worked successfully, so both were continued. The character development program required students to concentrate on character traits for which they received recognition. No grades for academic work were given, although grades were kept on file in the office in case students transferred out of the school. A narrative type of report card went home to the parents commenting on the students' character development. The belief held by Laura Cushman and her faculty was that by developing the traits of industry, responsibility,

reliability, courtesy, honesty, and integrity, a child would become a good scholar, as well as a good citizen. This system was continued for many years. The Cushman students did become good scholars. Their records at high schools and colleges around the country prove that this system had merit.⁴⁸

The contract system was very innovative at the time, and has come into more general use lately, especially in "open" classrooms. Each student had a weekly conference with the teacher and set up a plan of work (contract) for the week. The student promised to finish the work contracted each week and the teacher promised to give the necessary guidance to carry out the plan. Any unfinished work had to be taken home at the end of the week. Since there was a policy of no homework, the students worked very conscientiously to complete their contracts to avoid taking work home.⁴⁹

There was a general assembly each Friday for all pupils. The members of each class prepared demonstrations of various aspects of their schoolwork and presented the demonstrations to the other students, visitors, and parents. These assemblies continued until the late forties when they were cut to every two weeks.⁵⁰

Special classes, which met twice a week, included drum corps, boys and girls glee club, harmonica club, art and dramatic clubs, dancing, and competitive games. During this time, there was a special enrichment hour for gifted students in grades 4, 5, and 6. These students studied creative writing, art, sewing, shop, or music on an individual basis. Gifted students were chosen by the quality of their work and not by their I.Q. scores. Children were not labeled and locked in to a system. Different children were involved in the enrichment program at different times. Laura Cushman commented on this in 1938: "The addition of the enrichment hour is in line with the school's policy of adjusting the school program to the personal needs of the children it serves."⁵¹

The regular curriculum in the thirties included reading, language, composition, spelling, penmanship, dictionary skills, French, arithmetic, music, dictation, geography, drawing, U.S. history, phonics, and calisthenics. Children were also instructed in and evaluated on industry, personal habits, social and moral conduct, interest, motor control, concentration, comprehension, emotional control, obedience, self-control, judgment, punctuality, initiative, thrift, and adjustment. This was quite a lot to cover in the course of a school day.⁵²

A new building was added to the school in 1936. It was built on two acres directly across Potomac Circle from the main building. The preschool was moved to this new building, leaving more room in the original building. The new building came to be called the "Little School" and the original building the "Big School."⁵³

In 1936, the number one song on the hit parade was "Moon Over Miami," and plenty of tourists were coming down to see that moon. The enrollment at Cushman increased that year and every year from its inception until the 1940's.⁵⁴ The depression was barely noticed.

In 1938, the school opened with 200 students. Spanish was added to the curriculum and taught to all students above the second grade. The school was now offering two foreign languages to elementary students; this was unusual in Miami. Many private schools offered French, but Spanish was rare. A new game--kickball--was introduced in the physical education classes. That year, the best selling books for children were avidly read by Cushman students. These included Covered Wagon Days, Operas Every Child Should Know, Terhune Dog Stories, The Bobbsey Twins, The Story of Ferdinand the Bull, 100 Best Fairy Tales, Illustrated Bible Stories, and The Oz Books. Students voted on their favorite school lunch

and came up with salmon croquettes, creamed carrots and peas, whole wheat bread and butter, potato and celery salad, fruit jello, and milk. The cook, Mrs. McCrillus, cooked for the school for 20 years and was replaced by her assistant, Mary Roberts, who cooked for the school for 37 years. Originally, Mrs. McCrillus cooked the food at her home nearby and carted it to the school. In 1931, a kitchen was built at the school so the food could be cooked there.⁵⁵

The school year in the thirties ran about eight months; about three weeks shorter than the public school term. There was no check on the length of time students had to attend school, and most private schools ran a shorter term than public schools. School was in session almost every day of the term. Thanksgiving Day, but not the day following, Good Friday, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day were about the only holidays. Teacher work days were unheard of. Many winter residents came down for three or four months and entered their children in school. Some of these children returned year after year for their entire elementary schooling.⁵⁶

Cushman was one of the first schools in the area to use standardized testing. The practice of administering the Stanford Achievement Tests to students in grades 2-9 began

in the early thirties. The first graders were given the Metropolitan Achievement Test, and the kindergarten children, along with any new students, were given the Stanford-Binet I.Q. Test and the Betts Telebinocular Test. This was very innovative at the time. Cushman was one of very few schools in the state using these testing techniques.⁵⁷

Another innovation during these depression years was the nursery class which took students as young as two years of age. The nursery was started in 1932 under the direction of Helen Pope. The junior high school was reinstated at the same time. Additions were made to the building to make room for expansion at both ends. The nursery class had socialization as its main objective. Play, art, and music were the activities used to accomplish this objective.⁵⁸

The students were all encouraged in any creative endeavors, whether they were in nursery or junior high or elementary grades. Laura Cushman felt that "It is by consideration of the child rather than of the system primarily, that the pupils are fitted to master any system of education that may confront them in other schools or the mental problems that await them in their professions."⁵⁹

The War Years

The school opened a library in 1940. Until that time, each classroom had its own library. Catherine Wright

collected 500 volumes, a small card catalogue, some magazines, and opened the library in a newly enlarged room. Miss Cushman's brother had visited in the summer and built the bookshelves and a window seat. There are now over 8,000 volumes in the library on the same shelves that were built 40 years ago.⁶⁰

Latin and public speaking (for boys only) were added to the curriculum in the early forties. Both of these subjects were electives. Florida history became a staple of the fourth grade as it was in the public schools. Manuscript writing was used throughout the school and students were taught to read cursive writing, but not to write it. This unusual situation lasted until the late sixties. For a generation, Cushman students were easily recognized as adults by their distinctive manuscript writing. The practice ended because of complaints from secondary schools who were insistent that the children write cursively.⁶¹ Current events became an important concern in all grades during the war years. In response to a national movement, the study of "Democracy in Action" was instituted in all classes. Publications on the subject were available from the N.E.A., Parents magazine, and the Progressive Education Society. N.B.C. began a radio program with the title "Democracy in Action" aimed at elementary school students. Textbooks used

from 1939 to 1945 at Cushman to teach the subject included School Friends, Let's Take Turns, Enjoying Our Land, Your Land and Mine, Toward Freedom, Pioneering in Democracy, and The Way of Democracy.⁶²

Extracurricular activities, which students participated in during school hours, included Student Council, Junior Red Cross, Audubon Bird Society, Knitting Club, Safety Patrol (boys only), Drum and Bugle Corps (boys), and the school newspaper, The Cricket.⁶³

All of the teachers at the Cushman School belonged to the Florida Education Association and other professional organizations and were expected to attend the meetings and read education journals. The salaries were very low, and usually less than public school teachers were making. The only perquisite for teachers was a scholarship for every teacher's child. This perquisite brought many outstanding teachers to the school because they wanted private education for their own children. There were no other benefits such as retirement or medical insurance. Faculty meetings were held every two weeks, at night. Teachers were expected to attend all school functions, many of which were held in the evenings and on weekends. Teachers had to eat lunch with their classes and remain on duty throughout the day with very little planning time. They were expected to attend a

church or synagogue and conduct themselves with circumspection in off-duty hours. Faculty teas were given once a month with different teachers or administrators hosting them in their homes or classrooms. The principal met with each teacher once a week to discuss the progress of each student and any problems the teacher might have. Teachers were given almost free choice of materials or textbooks providing they adhered to the curriculum which they had an opportunity to help develop.⁶⁴

In 1941, Cushman was the only private school in the state to be given a "superior" rating in the list of accredited schools issued by the State Department of Education. The list had four ranks, superior, regular, limited, and non-accredited. The rating was based on a school visitation in which professional preparation of staff, curriculum, plant, and overall conditions were assessed. Two other private schools in the state received "regular" ratings. Very few public schools in the Miami area had "superior" ratings.⁶⁵

In 1941, students at the school formed the Pan American League to "further friendly relations between the United States and Latin American Republics." This group was very active in the forties and fifties and disbanded during the Cuban civil strife when anti-Latin sentiment was growing.⁶⁶

In 1942, war activities were taking much of the time and energy of Cushman students. Air raid drills were held more often than fire drills. Students were collecting tin-foil and hemming towels. Members of the Junior Red Cross and Knitting Club were knitting scarves and afghans for servicemen. Other students made sewing cases and ditty bats. War bonds and stamps were sold at school. Several "victory gardens" were put in and students canned 27 pints of tomatoes, 41 pints of beans, and 24 pints of chili sauce. Turnips, radishes, beets, onions, and lettuce were raised in the gardens. The Spring Play and "Living Pictures" programs were canceled for the duration because of gas rationing and blackouts. By the end of 1942, Cushman School had raised enough money selling war stamps to allow the government to purchase five jeeps. Rationing was a fact of life even at school where pencils, paste, crayons, and paper were rationed.⁶⁷

The curriculum in wartime stressed physical fitness and first aid. A new course, home living, was taught in grades 3-7. It encompassed nature study, family living, and social and economic foundations of the country. This course was later called everyday living.⁶⁸

In 1944, the girls physical education classes added baton twirling, baseball, and roller skating. The year 1944

also reflected the national trend of working women taking traditional male jobs--the Safety Patrol accepted girls for the first time. The school year lengthened by two weeks, starting in the middle of September.⁶⁹

Fewer tourist children came down because travel was restricted, so the enrollment did not increase that year. Junior high students viewed an exhibit at the public library: "The Soviet Union at War" which was sponsored by the Miami Council of American Soviet Friendship. The chorus was very active, entertaining servicemen who were stationed in the area.⁷⁰

During these years, the reputation of Laura Cushman and her school continued to grow. Dr. M. W. Carothers, director of the Division of Instruction for the Florida Department of Education, visited the school and commented that he had "the highest praise for Cushman," and that he could be quoted concerning the "school's outstanding quality."⁷¹

Expansion

At war's end, the Cushman School discontinued its junior high program with space at a premium the school continued only the elementary and preschool. A new wing was added to the Little School and the first grade moved across the street to join the preschool. Grades 2-6 remained in the Big School. The enrollment continued to be around 200

students in spite of the loss of the three junior high grades.⁷²

The enrichment period was changed so that all students could participate. Those who needed extra time in an academic subject could meet with their teacher and get help. The others were offered creative work in art, music, writing, or dramatics. Archery was a new activity in physical education, along with tumbling, pyramid building, tennis, shuffleboard, and badminton.⁷³

Cushman continued to grow until 1956 when the enrollment peaked at 230 students. That year, Miss Cushman urged her 20 teachers to look for "positive ways to help children develop self-esteem and self-confidence. We want self-direction and self-discipline rather than discipline based on obedience to a harsh and demanding authoritative leader. Above all we want discipline based on understanding."⁷⁴

The school year was expanded in the fifties. Beginning in 1950, Cushman students attended school for 180 days a year. This was the number of days as mandated for public school by state law. The Thanksgiving holiday was increased to two days and the Christmas vacation to a full two weeks.⁷⁵

The curriculum changed only slightly during the fifties. French was dropped, but Spanish continued. After Sputnik, a science lab was installed and greater emphasis placed on

that subject. Basic skills continued to be emphasized, as did character development. Students in the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades were given a modified schedule in which they had different teachers for social studies, math, and science in an effort to bolster those areas. The other subjects were taught in homeroom. Special teachers taught only math, science, and social studies.⁷⁶

Gifted students were given what was given every student-- a curriculum suited to the student's abilities. The philosophy for gifted students was an "enrichment of daily studies rather than acceleration or homogenous grouping. This program gives the child a fuller and deeper experience with which to meet future school situations."⁷⁷

The rooms were heated for the first time with the installation of gas heaters in 1957. A new kiln for the art room added ceramics to the art curriculum.⁷⁸

The emphasis on character development continued to be the hallmark of the school. Laura Cushman continued to believe in children. "The good," she said, "is in the child, and you just develop it." "Let the children learn to pull themselves up by their bootstraps; and these are their bootstraps: for one foot, responsibility; and for the other foot, emotional stability and security."⁷⁹

Changing Times

The sixties saw much change in education in Miami. The Cuban immigration of the early sixties had a great effect on the life in the city. Along with this phenomenon, the early sixties also saw court ordered integration in Miami public schools. Many private schools came into existence during this period and some were in direct competition with Cushman. Some people began to feel that the school was old-fashioned and out of step with the times. Miss Cushman refused to change her philosophy to keep pace with the times. She felt that good values did not go out of style. The enrollment slowly decreased. By 1968, there were fewer than 200 students in the school for the first time in 25 years.⁸⁰

In 1960, the school paper, the Cricket which had always been a professionally printed and outstandingly written school paper, was forced to cease publication because of prohibitive costs. It returned in the spring of 1961 in a typewritten, smaller format, appearing only once each quarter instead of every month. Library skills, which had previously been taught in a rather haphazard fashion, now became a part of the curriculum for all grades. The students in kindergarten and first grade had two library periods per week; all other students had library four days a week. Two of the

library periods were devoted to instruction in library skills. The other two were for reading. The biweekly assemblies were cut to once a month with two night programs per year, one at Christmas and another in the spring. The Open Court Reading program and Science Research Associates Reading Labs were adopted in the sixties. The Open Court system is a phonetic reading system using classic literature that is now considered a system for gifted children. All of the students at Cushman used this series of reading texts. It is still being used.⁸¹

In 1970, the students were required to wear uniforms and cursive writing replaced the manuscript writing. This was a break with tradition that was a sign of the times. The styles of the late sixties and the demands for students' rights led to both of these decisions. Four years later, Cushman celebrated its fiftieth anniversary with a gala dinner party. Many old students joined the large crowd honoring Laura Cushman and her school. In 1976, Laura Cushman retired as principal. Her basic philosophy remained intact.⁸²

Problems

Many problems almost caused the demise of the school in the seventies. A shortage of funds made it necessary for teachers to take a pay cut in the early seventies. The

enrollment continued to drop as a result of various factors. One factor was that the neighborhood in which the school was located was in transition and was rapidly deteriorating. It was not unusual to see prostitutes working the Boulevard in front of the school. Many homes were being turned into boarding houses for recent Cuban or Haitian immigrants. Another factor that contributed to the drop in enrollment was that Miami Country Day School, a nearby private school for boys, began admitting girls in 1972. Many families transferred their children to this school because it was in a better neighborhood and it had a junior high school as well. Several years later, Laura Cushman retired and this precipitated rumors that the school would close.

In 1976, enrollment was the lowest in the history of the school. At her retirement, the school was incorporated as a nonprofit corporation with a board of directors. Laura Cushman was elected president of the board of directors, a position she still holds. The drastically reduced enrollment meant a tragically small budget. Most of the tuition money was needed for salaries and running expenses. There was no endowment fund. Very little money was available for educational materials, maintenance, and repairs. This made it difficult to keep enrollment up to previous standards.⁸³

After Miss Cushman's retirement, Louise Sibley, who had worked at the school for more than 30 years, became principal. Sibley was an excellent educator with a Master's degree from Columbia University Teachers College. She had taught for many years, worked as the guidance counselor, and helped to develop curriculum. She did not feel that she had the training or personality for administrative duties. She took the position temporarily to keep the school open. Sibley was an educator with an exceptional ability to manage children. Under her direction, the enrollment slowly began to inch upward. Within three years, enrollment had topped 100. When Sibley retired in 1981, the enrollment was 120 students, and Cushman was on financially solid ground.⁸⁴

New Management

In 1979, Joan Lutton came to Cushman as a math teacher and assistant principal. In the spring of 1981, when Louise Sibley was hospitalized, Lutton was appointed acting principal. In the fall of 1981, she was appointed principal and elected to the board of directors.

During her tenure, the curriculum has been changed by making a schedule adjustment which changed the emphasis. Before 1982, the fourth, fifth, and sixth graders were attending three classes in the morning taught by teachers in the

fields of math, science, and social studies. This year, the schedule was changed so that the students now have specialists in the fields of reading, math, and language arts and are taught the remaining subjects by their homeroom teachers. D'Nealian handwriting has also been introduced. This is a simplified method of writing that will enable students to write more legibly. A new spelling system developed by the University of Iowa was also put in place this year. Another addition to the curriculum was computer science. Every student in the school has access to the computer room for a minimum of 40 minutes a week. Older students were scheduled for computer time four times a week. There was also "free access" time in the afternoon for students who were caught up in their other work. The computer lab was run by mother volunteers who were under the direction of the principal. The students were learning programming in Basic and using commercial software for computer assisted instruction.

The administration made an effort to work with the public schools. As a result, some Cushman students attend public school classes for certain areas which are not available at Cushman School. There are students attending part-time programs in gifted education, learning disabilities, and speech therapy, at their neighborhood public schools. The rest of their time is spent at Cushman.

An effort has been made by the new administration to have the enrollment reflect the ethnic make-up of the neighborhood in which it is located. This has been successful, and there are now students in the school representing a wide range of ethnic, religious, and economic backgrounds.

Another priority of the new management has been to improve the facilities. Close to \$50,000 has been spent in the last two years to refurbish the 60-year-old building. It has been caulked, waterproofed, painted, and landscaped, and a security system has been installed. Most of the floors have been refinished and Hunter fans installed in all rooms. New books and audio-visual equipment have been purchased. Medical insurance and retirement plans have been secured for the staff. The 1982 enrollment is 155 students. New sections of kindergarten and first grade have been opened, and almost all classes are filled.⁸⁵

Looking to the Future

The future of the Cushman School looks bright. The philosophy of the school, with its emphasis on character development, will remain in force. The child centered atmosphere will continue to be a priority.

Innovative educational experiments are possible because of the unique situation at Cushman School. It is a small school in an urban area, free of the constraints imposed by

government bureaucracy. New methods and materials can be tested with ease. The students are highly motivated and many of the discipline problems which handicap public schools are nonexistent. It is possible to try experiments in a manner that would not be possible in public schools, because of large class size and governmental restriction.

Fund raising to establish scholarships for needy students and provide funds for growth will be an important activity in the coming years. Scholarships are still given to teachers' children and to a few other children whose parents cannot afford the tuition, but the money is not recouped for these students. This year, there are 25 students who are not paying tuition. This represents over \$50,000 worth of revenue.⁸⁶ If there was a scholarship endowment, this money could be paid into the business account. There is room for growth in many areas at Cushman School. The school should grow in its ability to serve its students and not necessarily in its total population. A maximum of 200 students should be the goal. If the enrollment becomes too large, the distinct character of the school cannot be preserved. The small classes and individual attention derived therefrom are valuable aids to education. All of the students know all of the other students and the teachers know all of the students as well. This gives the

school a familial feeling in which everyone involved cares about the school and the people associated with it. Cushman School will grow with the future while preserving the traditions that have made it an excellent school in the past.

NOTES

¹ Joan Lutton, interview with Laura Cushman at her home, August 15, 1981. (Interview in author's private collection.) Also, Family Bible (in private collection of Laura Cushman).

² Temple Times, November 1951, Vol. 1, #5, Church Newspaper: White Temple Methodist Church, Miami, Florida (in author's private collection).

³ Honorary Doctor of Laws certificate from Morningside College (in private collection of Laura Cushman).

⁴ Temple Times.

⁵ Isidor Cohen, Historical Sketches and Sidelights of Miami (privately printed, 1925), p. 146.

⁶ Obituary, The Miami Herald, January 25, 1978 (author's private collection).

⁷ Joan Lutton, interview with Laura Cushman at her home, August 22, 1981. (Interview in author's private collection.)

⁸ Arva Moore Parks, The Magic City, Miami (Tulsa: Continental Heritage Press, Inc., 1981).

⁹ Personal recollection of the author.

¹⁰ Newspaper clipping, undated (in scrapbook in Laura Cushman's private collection).

¹¹ Newspaper clipping, June 1921 (?) (in scrapbook in Laura Cushman's private collection).

¹² The Park Primary School. Handbill (in Laura Cushman's private collection).

13 Information written on a photograph hanging in the office at the Cushman School.

14 The Cushman School (handbill, 1924-25) (in private collection of Laura Cushman).

15 Class notes from Columbia University and University of California at Berkeley (in private collection of Laura Cushman).

16 Laura Cushman to N. M. Salley and from N. M. Salley, letters, beginning 1931 (private collection of Laura Cushman).

17 Laura Cushman to N. M. Salley, letter, September 13, 1933 (copy in private collection of Laura Cushman).

18 Laura Cushman to and from N. M. Salley, 1934 (private collection of Laura Cushman).

19 Laura Cushman to and from N. M. Salley, letters, 1935-1939 (private collection of Laura Cushman).

20 Christian Science Monitor, October 28, 1933.

21 The Cricket, November 1935; Cushman School newspaper, school archives.

22 The Cricket, October 1957.

23 The Cricket, December 1957.

24 The Miami Herald (clipping, undated, 1961).

25 Personal recollection of the author.

26 Joan Lutton interview with Laura Cushman, August 29, 1981.

27 The Cricket, October 1948 (school archives).

28 Joan Lutton interview with Laura Cushman, August 5, 1982.

29 Laura Cushman to parents of Cushman students, undated (in private collection of the author).

- 30 Joan Lutton interview with Laura Cushman, August 12, 1982.
- 31 Personal recollection of the author.
- 32 The Miami Herald, August 23, 1981.
- 33 The Cushman School Brochure, 1926-27 (private collection of Laura Cushman).
- 34 School records in The Cushman School Archives (1924-25).
- 35 The Miami News undated clipping (1924?) (in author's private collection).
- 36 Joan Lutton interview with Laura Cushman, August 12, 1982.
- 37 Joan Lutton interview with Laura Cushman, August 12, 1982.
- 38 Joan Lutton interview with Don Stobs, former student of Cushman School. 1982.
- 39 Newspaper clipping, undated (scrapbook in private collection of Laura Cushman).
- 40 Joan Lutton interview with Laura Cushman, August 12, 1982.
- 41 City of Miami, Application for Building Permit, June 17, 1926 (scrapbook in private collection of Laura Cushman).
- 42 City of Miami, Application for Building Permit, June 17, 1926 (scrapbook in private collection of Laura Cushman).
- 43 School Records (in The Cushman School Archives).
- 44 The Crust, 1926. Early Cushman School paper (in the private collection of the author).
- 45 The Crust, 1926-1929.
- 46 The Crust, 1926.

- 47 School Records 1927-32 (in The Cushman School Archives).
- 48 School Records, 1932-33.
- 49 Newspaper clipping, 1929 (scrapbook in the private collection of Laura Cushman).
- 50 Personal recollection of the author.
- 51 Newspaper clipping, 1938 (in private collection of Laura Cushman).
- 52 School Records, 1932-39.
- 53 The Cricket, September 1937 (in The Cushman School Library).
- 54 School Records, 1936-37.
- 55 The Cricket, October 1938.
- 56 School Records.
- 57 School Records.
- 58 Newspaper clipping, 1932 (in private collection of Laura Cushman).
- 59 Joan Lutton interview with Laura Cushman, September 13, 1982.
- 60 Catherine Wright, handwritten history of the Cushman School Library from 1940-1961 (in school library).
- 61 Personal recollection.
- 62 The Cricket, 1941-46.
- 63 The Cricket, 1941.
- 64 Joan Lutton interview with Laura Cushman, September 13, 1982.
- 65 The Cricket, October 1941.

- 66 The Cricket, January 1942.
- 67 The Cricket, March 1942.
- 68 The Cricket, October 1942.
- 69 The Cricket, November 1944.
- 70 Newspaper clipping, undated (in private collection of Laura Cushman).
- 71 The Cricket, February 1945.
- 72 School Records, 1946.
- 73 The Cricket, October 1946.
- 74 Notes to teachers from Laura Cushman, 1956 (in private collection of author).
- 75 School Records, 1950.
- 76 Notes to teachers from Laura Cushman, 1956 (in private collection of author).
- 77 School Records, 1953.
- 78 School Records, 1957.
- 79 Notes to teachers from Laura Cushman, 1959 (in private collection of author).
- 80 School Records, 1960-68.
- 81 School Records, 1969.
- 82 Personal recollection of the author.
- 83 School Records, 1972-76.
- 84 School Records, 1977-81.
- 85 School Records, 1982.
- 86 School Records, 1982.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY

Forces that have influenced the development of the Cushman School include the Florida "boom," the tourist trade, the depression, World War II, the Cuban immigration, integration, the Mariel/Haitian influx of immigrants, the loss of faith in public schools, and computer technology. These social forces were all important in the development of the school, but the guiding and most important force has always been the personality and educational philosophy of Laura Cushman.

Laura Cushman pursued her dream and saw it become a reality. As she studied and learned by experience, she used her knowledge to shape the growth of her school. Her Association with colleges such as Columbia Teachers College, Florida State College for Women, and the University of California at Berkeley brought her into contact with the educational philosophy of a diverse group of thinkers. She studied the work of Dewey and Piaget and put their philosophies to work in the Cushman School. Dewey's philosophy of "learning by doing" was one of the most important tenets

of the school. Piaget's work with young children gave Laura Cushman many ideas which she incorporated in her school.

The many talented teachers who worked at the school have also been a force in its development. For the most part, the teachers have been well qualified and extremely devoted to children and the school. A group of close to 25 teachers spent 20 years or more at Cushman. A few other teachers taught for 30 years or more. This type of loyalty certainly affected the development of the school.

Mae Knight Clark went on to a career writing textbooks. Sara Lou Hammond left Cushman to become a professor at Florida State University on the recommendation of Laura Cushman. Buna Edwards and Catherine Christie, already mentioned above, were talented artists who worked in their respective fields as well as teaching. Evelyn Simon, the music teacher for more than 20 years, is a talented vocalist and pianist who writes music as well as teaches it. Betty Lunnon, former librarian, organized the library system in American Samoa. Several teachers have come from the ranks of former students. Shirley Davis, Ann Stobs, and Hilary Orr were all former students who returned as teachers. All of the teachers in the past, as well as the present teachers, have had a voice in developing curriculum for the school. Teachers have always been given great latitude in selecting

textbooks and materials. This has greatly influenced the school's direction. Because of the philosophy of meeting the individual needs of every student, the teachers were the most logical choice to develop curriculum and choose materials. Their impact on the school's growth cannot be overestimated.

To a lesser extent, parents have influenced the development of the school. The nature of a private school is such that it must listen to the desires of its patrons. Without parents who are supportive, the school could not exist. The first has been in the general make-up of the school. Parents created the demand for the junior high grades and the nursery class. Neither of these would have been added had not the demand been voiced by parents. Parents have also influenced some areas of the curriculum. Parental demand put French, Spanish, and Latin in the curriculum. Parents also influenced the decisions to use cursive writing, wear uniforms, and give letter grades on the report cards. The school has always been responsive to the input from parents.

Social factors have probably had less influence on the curriculum than Laura Cushman, the teachers and parents. Nevertheless, their impact has been felt. Without the "boom," the school would never have been started, and Laura Cushman would have had a distinguished career as a public school

educator. The "boom" made it possible for her to implement a curriculum in which she believed, for kindergarten students who would not have had a school to attend. The tourist trade with the "winter children" who were in and out of school necessitated a flexible curriculum which could be adapted to the individual child. This proved to be a good system for all children.

The depression brought more emphasis on practical aspects of education. Cushman School had more money available than public schools during the depression, because people with money were sending their children to private schools. This extra margin made innovations possible at Cushman which were not feasible in public schools. These have been discussed above. World War II brought many curriculum changes which have also been detailed above. The biggest change wrought by the war was the emphasis on learning about democracy and its alternatives. This important area is still being taught at Cushman. The Cuban immigration and integration forced Cushman to become more competitive with other private schools which were springing up in the neighborhood. An awareness of different cultures was needed in the curriculum and implemented as a result of these two social developments which occurred around the same time.

The more recent social phenomena, the Mariel/Haitian influx coupled with the loss of faith in public schools and computer technology have been the social stimulants of the past two years. Cushman's answer to these social problems has been to continue to emphasize basic skills, to give more importance to the teaching of Spanish, to broaden the student population, and to incorporate new technology into the learning process. The changing social climate of Dade County has always influenced the direction of Cushman School, and will continue to do so in the future.

Private schools enable parents to guide and control the education of their children when the parents perceive that the children's needs are not being met by the public school system. The private school is a protection against state monopoly of education with its inherent intolerance of minority views of cultural and religious beliefs.

Every parent has a legally inherent right to control the education of his child and the freedom to provide for that education through means other than the public school system if he so desires. Many parents choose to exercise this right by sending their children to an independent school. The independent school has the responsibility to provide that education in a healthy, safe, environment. Because the independent school is not under government control, it is free

to teach what it wishes to teach in the manner in which it wishes.

Cushman School is an independent school which seeks to offer an alternative to the parent who seeks to educate his child in a school not under direct government control. Cushman School differs in many fundamental aspects from public schools. The basic difference is, of course, that tuition is paid in order for a child to attend. This gives the school the right of refusal which public schools do not have. Cushman also has the opportunity to build upon religious ideas which is forbidden in public schools. The class size can be kept smaller (15 students for nursery-1st grade; 20 students for 2-6th grades), and the students can be given more individual attention as a result. Innovative styles of teaching and materials can be used because there is no "state adopted textbook list" or teaching model. Indeed, teachers who are not state certified may be hired on an individual basis. This means that some very talented teachers are available to the Cushman School but not to public schools who may hire only state certified teachers. The central planning, direction, and control, along with the standardized procedures and techniques of public school, are not necessary at a small private school such as Cushman. Instead of

working to turn out uniformly educated students, the Cushman School strives to turn out educated individualists.

Discipline is not a problem at the Cushman School. Students observe the few rules and exhibit proper school behavior in their regard for themselves, others, and school property. If students are not able to participate in the life of the school, they are asked to leave. Since all students are aware of what is required when they enter, it is rarely necessary to dismiss a student.

The school is small enough to allow all students to know everyone who works in the school, including the principal who also teaches. This creates a family feeling which helps to give the students a sense of security and self-worth.

The Cushman School is a noncompetitive school. Admission is not selective. No child is turned away if he can handle the school's program and is not a discipline problem. Grades are not emphasized, and awards and accolades are given for growth in good character. Service on the student council, safety patrol, and school newspaper is earned by getting good reports in industry, responsibility, and courtesy. Games played in physical education are usually non-competitive activities in which every child can participate. Only well-behaved children are permitted to attend the

after school study hall, which is never used as punishment. Homework is not given for punishment either, but as an adjunct to the daily work and for practice. Students are assigned homework on an individual basis according to what each needs to practice. A positive, happy, atmosphere is the rule in keeping with the aims of the school which appear in Appendix D.

The role of the independent school in the future can be as a helpmate instead of an adversary. Independent schools in general, and the Cushman School in particular, can be a valuable asset to the society as a whole. According to Otto Kraushaar, " . . . almost everyone agrees that the most valuable service private venturing in education can render is to demonstrate new and better ways. Most private schools are small and flexible enough for a quick turn-about."¹ Fred Hechinger says, "The fact is that public schools need-- and need desperately--the free wheeling presence of the independent schools."² The need is definitely there. The public schools need competition. They can profit by the association with private schools. As has been shown earlier in this work, private schools have led the way in many areas, and were, in fact, the beginning of the entire education system in America and the state of Florida.

Cushman School will be a leader in the future as it has been in the past. It must continue to regard learning as an important activity and not a commodity. It must seek to bring its resources to bear on the difficult problems that confront society and individuals. It must educate students who can solve those problems. It must teach its students how to cope with a world that is changing faster than anyone can comprehend. It must continue to concern itself with the emotional as well as the intellectual climate of learning so that what is learned will be meaningful. Teachers must continue in their role of facilitators and guides to the child who is the source and principal agent of his own development. Emphasis on values, feelings, appreciations, and interpersonal relationships must continue to be an important part of the school experience.

Otto Kraushaar gives advice to serve as a guide to the school of the future. He says, "You start with living children and build a teaching staff, a curriculum, and a school from there. Instead of trying to fit the student to the school, the new school turns around 180 degrees and fits itself to the needs of the students now and in the future."³ Kraushaar could have written that about the Cushman School. He continues in the same vein: "The materials of instruction

are of secondary importance compared to the conditions and setting of learning. Unless the atmosphere of the school is conducive to the opening of the child's mind, even the 'best' curriculum will not provide a useful education."⁴ The Cushman School has a setting that is conducive to opening a child's mind.

Cushman School has a responsibility to the community it serves to offer a diversity in education, to insure that parents have a choice, to encourage a commitment to excellence in education, and to share with the public schools the task of educating future citizens.

NOTES

¹ Otto Kraushaar, American Nonpublic Schools Patterns of Diversity (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972), p. 336.

² Kraushaar, p. 336.

³ Kraushaar, p. 339.

⁴ Kraushaar, p. 347.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

STATE PROGRAM OF STUDIES FOR ELEMENTARY
SCHOOLS IN FLORIDA, 1918*

First Grade and Second Grade

Reading

Number Work

Language

Spelling

Nature Study

Hygiene

Drawing

Hand Work

Music

Writing

Morals and Manners

Third Grade

Reading

Number Work

Language

Spelling

Home Geography

Nature Study

Hygiene

Drawing

Hand Work

Music

Writing

Morals and Manners

*Public School Education in Florida, p. 230.

APPENDIX A (CONTINUED)

<u>Fourth Grade</u>	<u>Fifth Grade</u>	<u>Sixth Grade</u>
Reading	Reading	Reading
Arithmetic	Arithmetic	Arithmetic
Language	Language	Grammar
Spelling	Spelling	Spelling
Geography	Geography	Geography
Hygiene	Hygiene	Florida History
Drawing	U.S. History	Hygiene
Hand Work	Drawing	Drawing
Music	Hand Work	Music
Writing	Music	Writing
Morals and Manners	Writing	Morals and Manners
	Morals and Manners	Hand Work

APPENDIX B

CURRICULUM IN DADE COUNTY SCHOOLS 1920-1927*

First Grade and Second Grade

Reading

English

Writing

Spelling

Arithmetic

Nature Studies

Citizenship

Health Education

Music

Art-Crafts

Third Grade

Reading

English

Writing

Spelling

Arithmetic

Geography

Nature Studies

Citizenship

Health Education

Music

Art-Crafts

*Public School Progress in Dade County, Florida, pp. 14-15.

APPENDIX B (CONTINUED)

<u>Fourth Grade</u>	<u>Fifth Grade</u>	<u>Sixth Grade</u>
Reading	Reading	Reading
English	English	English
Writing	Writing	Writing
Spelling	Spelling	Spelling
Arithmetic	Arithmetic	Arithmetic
Geography	Geography	Geography
Nature Studies	Nature Studies	Nature Studies
Citizenship	History	History
Health Education	Citizenship	Citizenship
Music	Health Education	Health Education
Art-Crafts	Music	Music
	Art-Crafts	Art-Crafts

APPENDIX C

ACCREDITING AGENCIES WHICH ARE MEMBERS OF THE FLORIDA ASSOCIATION OF ACADEMIC NONPUBLIC SCHOOLS (FAANS)*

Association of Independent Schools of Florida (AISF)
Board of Regents of the Episcopal Diocese of Florida (BREDF)
Florida Association of Christian Schools (FACS)
Florida Catholic Conference Accreditation Committee (FCC)
Florida Council of Independent Schools (FCIS)
Florida Conference of Seventh Day Adventists (FCSDA)
Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, Florida-Georgia District,
Committee for Parish Education (LCMS)

Also an accrediting agency, but not a member of FAANS:

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS)

*Nonpublic School Directory 1965-66. National Center for Statistics (U.S. H.E.W. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C.), p. 57.

APPENDIX D

STANDARDS AT THE CUSHMAN SCHOOL 1924-1982*

The following aims are set up as standards at the Cushman School for 1924-1982:

1. A happy attitude.
2. Acceptance of the tasks of growing and learning as a personal responsibility.
3. Industry and perseverance in accomplishing these accepted tasks.
4. Honesty with self and with others in every phase of living.
5. Growth in ability to attack learning problems and to use judgment in changing situations.
6. Self-control and poise.
7. Wholesome personal habits.
8. An attitude that seeks to understand others' point of view and is ever tolerant and kind.
9. Gracious and unfailing courtesy.
10. Appreciations that enrich life.

The development of the above aims is the task of the school. A child who reaches a high level of achievement according to the above standards will, of necessity, be doing the best academic work of which he or she is capable.

*The Cushman School Brochure.

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of the Cushman School.

Clippings, letters, notes, correspondence, pictures, books,
certificates of awards and other mementos in the personal
collection of Laura Cushman and the author.

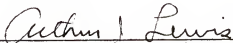
Records of the Cushman School in the personal collection of
the author.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Joan Drody Lutton was born on March 14, 1942, in Jacksonville, Florida. She moved to Miami in 1948 and attended Dade County Public Schools. She attended the University of Florida for three years as an undergraduate. She met and married her husband, Stephen Carr Lutton, while a student at UF. They have three children, Stephanie, 9; Ronald, 13; and Andrew, 18. Mrs. Lutton was graduated from Rutgers University with a B.A. in 1966 and from Barry College with an M.S. in 1977.

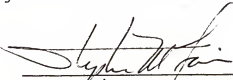
Mrs. Lutton has taught English and math in public and private schools for 20 years. She has been department chairman, curriculum supervisor, student activities director, and assistant principal. She is now principal of the Cushman School, Miami, Florida.

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Education.



Arthur J. Lewis, Chairman
Professor of Instructional
Leadership and Support

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Education.



Steve Paine
Associate Professor of
Instructional Leadership
and Support

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Education.



Paul S. George
Professor of Instructional
Leadership and Support

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Education.



Lynn C. Oberlin
Professor of General Teacher
Education

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Education.



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This dissertation was submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Division of Curriculum and Instruction in the College of Education and to the Graduate Council, and was accepted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education.

December, 1982

Dean for Graduate Studies
and Research